No. 904
Friday
9 Aug. '96

PRIVATE EYE

£1

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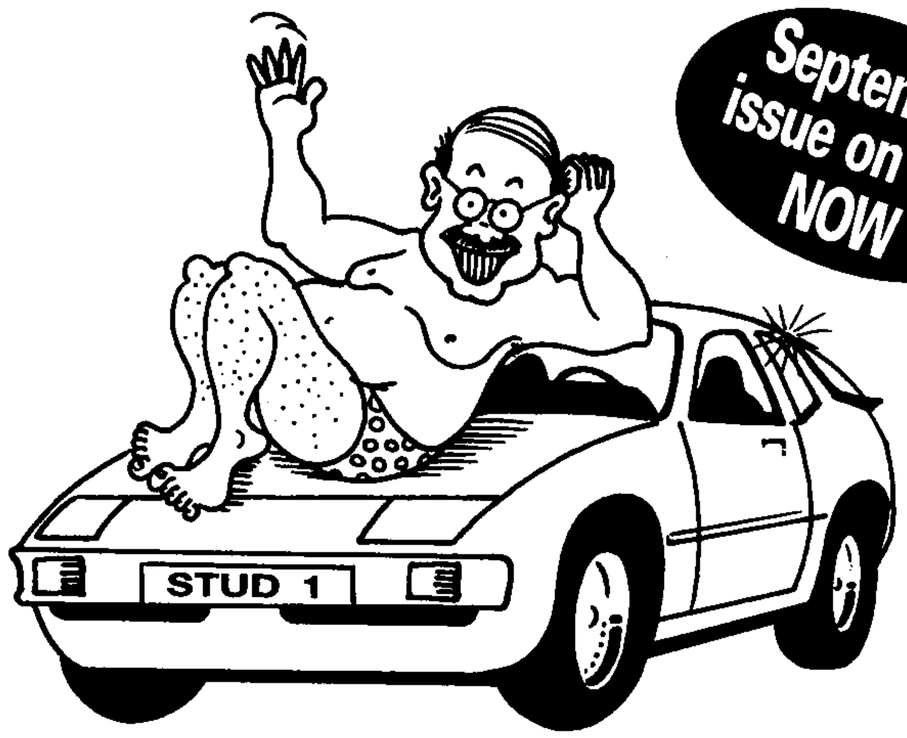

Men get even in Men's Health

MAGAZINE

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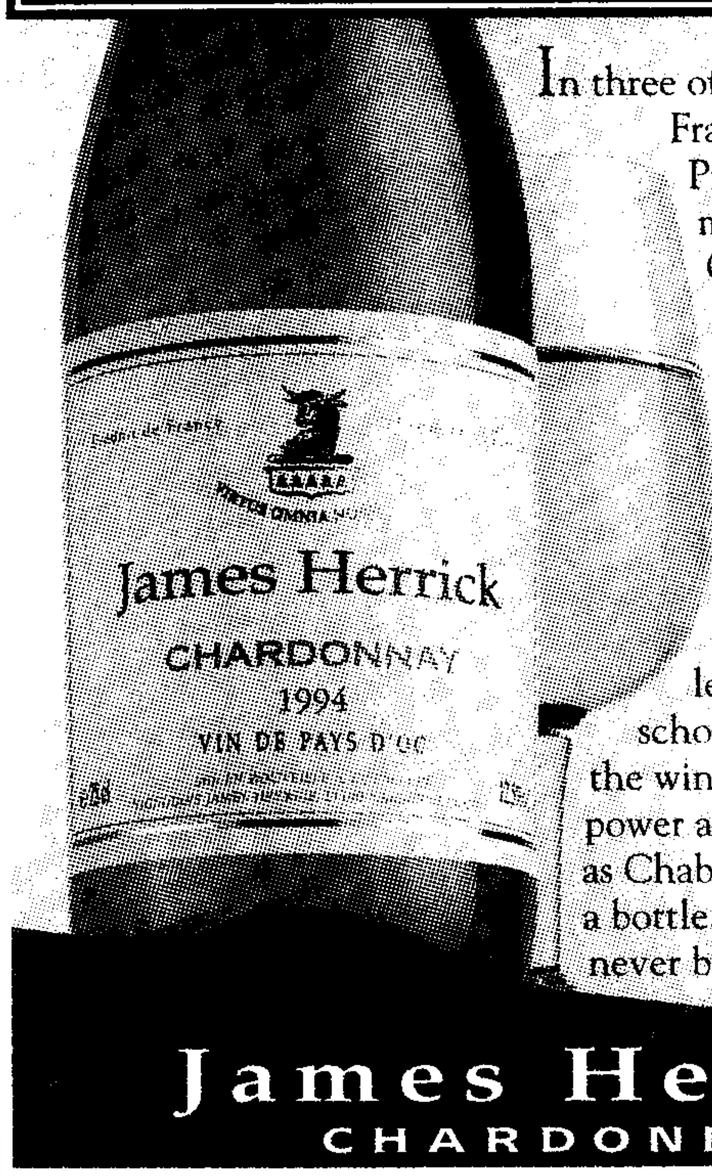

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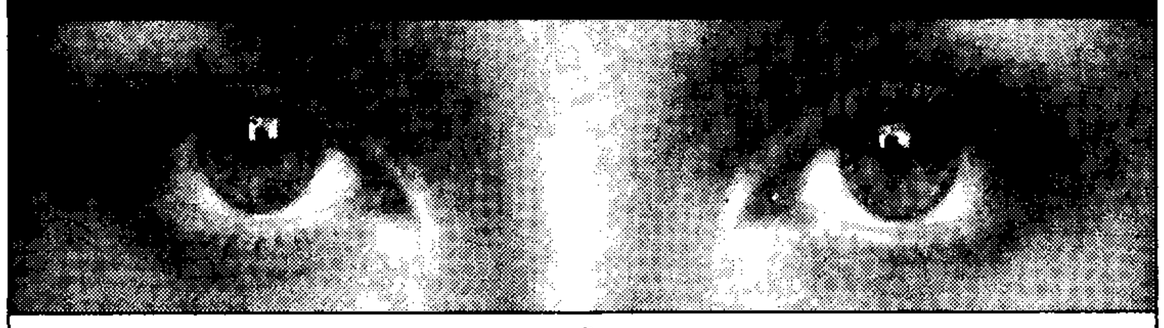

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Lord Gnomihan

THERE has been much ill-informed speculation in the newspapers as to the rightful heir to the ancient and venerable title of Lord Gnomihan. I should like to end this unhappy and unpleasant state of uncertainty by publishing a definitive genealogy of the Gnomihan family which should set the record straight once and for all:

LORD GNOMIHAN OF BANGCOCK

married (1963) 1st Lady Gnomihan
(née Debbie Basildon)

Wayne — Clint — Sean

married (1975) 2nd Lady Gnomihan
(née Rum Pee Pum Pee)

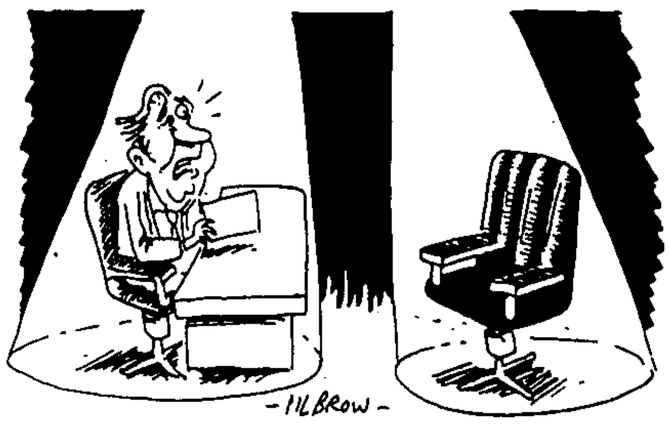
Bah Stud — Lah Gur Lout

married (1975) 3rd Lady Gnomihan
(née Chee Po Fuk)

Dis Koh Fred — Peregrine Worsthorne

I hope this makes things clear and prevents irresponsible journalists using my family to try to discredit the essential hereditary principle of our democracy.

E. Strobes
Lord Gnomihan
Phuket
Thailand



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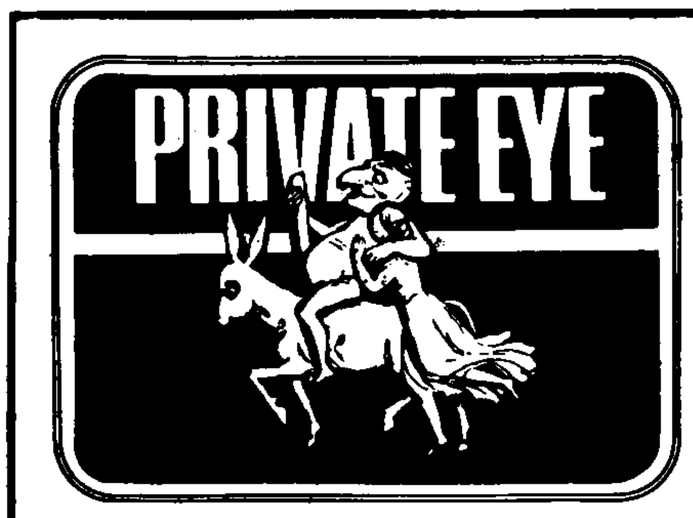


COLOUR SECTION

THE stinging recent attack by the Commons public accounts committee on Peter Davis, regulator of the national lottery, seems to have left out an important question: why did Mr Davis ever agree to become the regulator in the first place?

The committee condemns as "unwise" his decision to stay in the sumptuous Long Island home of Mr Carl Menges in October 1994. Mr Menges's New York investment house, Donaldson, Lufkin and Jenrette, owns a quarter of the American lottery company G-Tech, the biggest lottery company in the world, which by October 1994 had been handed a lucrative slice in the British lottery.

Davis explained to the committee that his wife Vanessa had been close friends with Menges's wife Cordelia for more than 20 years. Asked why he had agreed to be flown from New York to the Menges household in a private G-Tech jet, Davis said the arrangements had been changed at the last minute and it would have been "highly inconvenient for the Menges to change plans and discourteous to refuse to accompany the rest of the party".

The MPs were unimpressed by this explanation. But no one asked the rather obvious question: if Davis's wife was a "longstanding" pal of the wife of the man whose company owned a quarter of the biggest lottery company in the world, why did he consider himself a proper person to regulate the British lottery? The MPs report records that "Mr Menges informed Mr Davis (of his vast stake in G-Tech) following Mr Davis's appointment as director-general of the national lottery". Why then did Mr Davis not resign at once and allow the lottery to be regulated by someone who had no connection with lottery companies? No question, no answer.

SOUTH West Water's former managing director Bill Fraser received a pay-off of more than £300,000 when he resigned from his two-day-a-week job in the wake of the cryptosporidium virus outbreak (see *Eye* 902). But at least he can get on his smart Jaguar motor car and find another job because SWW generously allowed him to keep the year-old vehicle as well.

Executive chairman Keith Court also decided to take early retirement after the virus outbreak in the water supply — and after a hosepipe ban which continued long after last year's drought-ridden summer.

Now, in an announcement in the annual report, shareholders will be delighted to read that Court has quietly withdrawn his request for early retirement after fellow board members asked him to stay. So, reluctantly, Court agreed to keep the £104,000 basic salary and £36,000 annual pension contribution.

Meanwhile, water companies are "losing" the details of their profits and failing to say how much is being handed over to the vast conglomerates which run 10 of them.

Even the normally placatory Ofwat's National Customer Council, a semi-official body picked by water regulator Ian Byatt, is asking: "What have the utilities got to hide?" The answer is that if the water companies spell out the details of their vastly profitable businesses they will be forced to make the investment that is needed and cut their prices. The complex cross-subsidisation between water companies and their "non-core" offshoots makes it impossible to safeguard consumers.

WEALTHY "businessman" Wafic Said no longer wants to be known for his role in the billion pound Al Yamamah arms deal but for his philanthropy — and a £20 million donation to set up a business school at Oxford university should help in this connection.

While the university has already allocated a prime city centre site — a sports field for university employees close to Mansfield College — there are several obstacles to Said getting his school in the centre of the city.

Firstly, the groundsman of the sports field, Bill Baker, is former leader of the ruling Labour group on Oxford city council and now a councillor and sheriff of the city. As he will lose his job if Said's building gets permission, Baker can be expected to be heavily in favour of permission being refused.

Oxford city council has designated the area in question as an open space which should not be developed, so the plans have a good chance of refusal. A survey by local Green party members revealed 73 per cent of residents to be against.

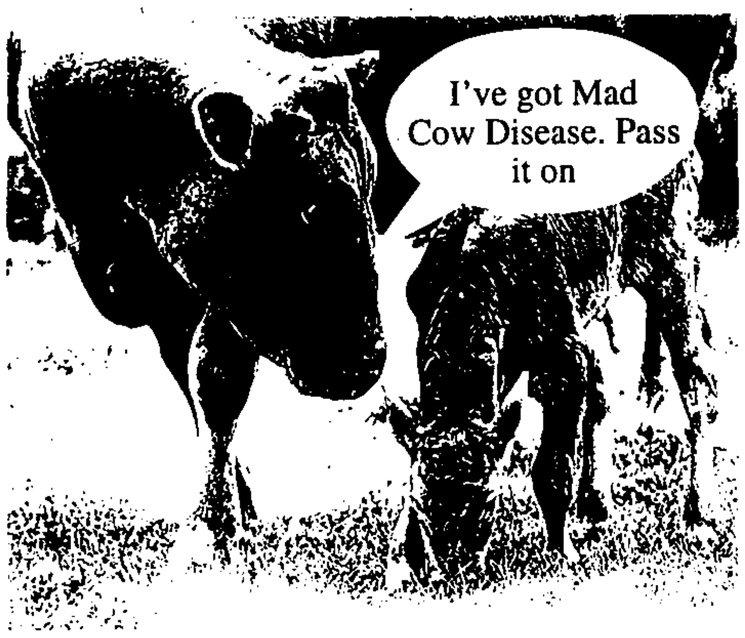
Some academics are also angry at the timing of the announcement — just after they had left for the summer — and by the obvious lengthy planning behind it. An architectural competition for the Said building had already been secretly held and the winner chosen. Significantly, the design was headed "The North project" after the university's enthusiastic vice-chancellor, Dr Peter North.

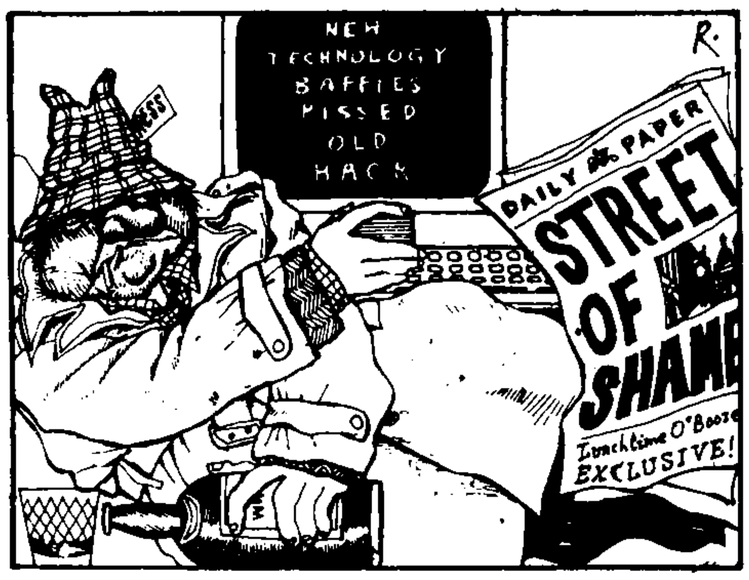
The university executive may be behind Said, but the decision must go to the university's parliament, "Congregation". Although the "Congregation" is not known as a dissenting voice it proved it was no pushover when it refused executive plans to give Margaret Thatcher an honorary degree.

But why should the great benefactor be thwarted? He simply wants to give his adopted country a business school to rival those of the American Ivy League universities. In fact Oxford already has its own business school at Templeton College; it is well-respected and has regular research and consulting links with Harvard Business School. It is also well located for expansion, on the edge of the city, and has outlying planning permission for educational buildings. So if Wafic Said were truly interested in developing the business capability of Oxford university, all he need do is take his ample cheque book to Templeton College. But then "Said Foundation" has a nicer ring to it, doesn't it?

- *Hallo! to Hezza, Chazza and Thazza* 5
- *Even Sillier Season — HP Special* 6/7
- *On The Lifeboats* 12
- *John Major's Olympic Diary* 18
- *Foot on Stagecoach* 26

NEW HEALTH SHOCKER





FRESH from his Houdini-like escape from the Scott inquiry, Sir Nicholas Lyell, the attorney-general, continues to spend public money recklessly.

Lie-all fielded both Sir Derek Spencer, solicitor-general, and Philip Havers QC, the son of a former Tory attorney-general, in an enormously expensive action for contempt of court against five national newspapers who were accused of prejudicing a jury against Gillian Taylforth's lover, Geoff Knights, for reporting his fracas with a taxi-driver.

In what was described by objective observers as a lamentable performance, Sir Derek could not produce one single example of likely prejudice. After three days in which Sir Derek grew more and more bad tempered, Messrs Justice Schiemann and Smedley threw his case out and awarded costs (believed to be £300,000) against central funds (the taxpayer).

Stung by this blow to their esteem, Sir Nicholas and Sir Derek are considering spending another hundred thousand or so of our money to take the case to the House of Lords.

THE news that the home secretary has sent the Carl Bridgewater murder case back to the appeal court made the front page of the *Daily Express*. Oddly, there was no reference to its other front-page "story" on 11 April this year, which was devoted entirely to a virulent attack on the BBC programme *Rough Justice* for daring to question the verdict.

"WHY DON'T THEY THINK OF CARL?" screamed the headline, over an article denouncing "campaigners" on the subject for their "one-sided" view. This was backed by a thunderous editorial which insisted that none of the inquiries into the case "have produced anything to suggest that those convictions were unsafe".

Alas! It transpires that this opinion is not even shared by that inveterate *Daily Express* reader Michael Howard. No wonder Fleet Street's Great Crusader has come over all coy.

WHILE building societies reward savers with near-invisible interest rates, the building society gravy train still overflows for Fleet Street's overpaid and overdined — but always objective — personal finance editors.

In early August a charabanc of financial hacks was due to spend a delightful evening, courtesy of the Yorkshire Building Society, at the Waterside Inn at Bray, where a modest meal with wine leaves no change from £100. The aim, apparently, was to help journalists "know us better".

The Yorkshire Building Society of course is owned by its members — very few of whom have ever sampled Waterside Inn cuisine. But the Waterside jolly is a cheapie compared to a forthcoming freebie organised by the Bristol & West.

Next month it will fly personal finance editors to an all expenses paid "very enjoyable weekend" in Guernsey to "watch a cricket match and meet some of the society's directors". If that isn't exciting enough, the hacks are also being lured with two nights at the top class St Pierre Park Hotel, a gala dinner and "entertainment in St Peter Port". Bristol & West Instant Access savers would need the interest on around £40,000 to buy a similar break.

MORE on the employment practices of the sanctimonious *Guardian*: two months after printers at the Guardian Press Centre were commended for their hard work in carrying out repairs after the IRA bomb blast, the workers have received their marching orders.

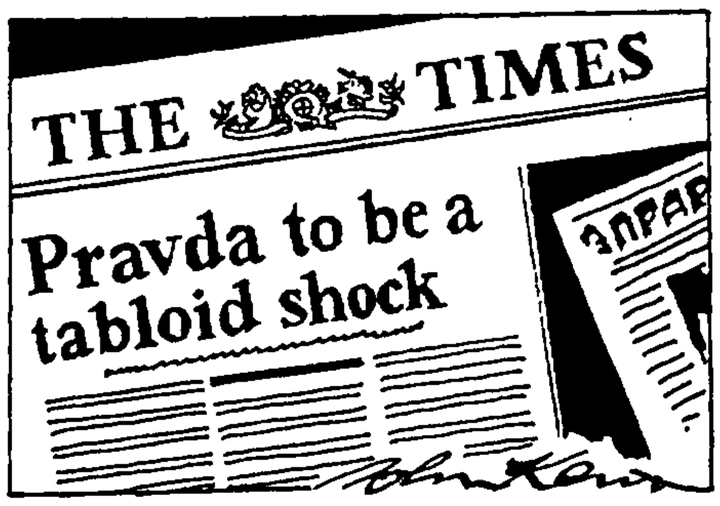
The paper decided to close the print works and move to the West Ferry works in London, sacking more than 200 employees to improve profit margins. Now the workers have discovered that the terms and conditions of their redundancy agreements had been changed without their knowledge. Instead of four weeks pay for every year worked, production staff will receive three weeks; and the minimum redundancy payout is no longer a year's pay but six months.

Grauniad bosses tried to avoid making pay-outs to casual workers, even though some had worked at the plant for 24 years. And workers were told that if they disrupted production in any way they would lose their redundancy pay. All this was in the same week that the *Grauniad* leader column opined: "In a democratic society unions have a right to strike in a just cause."

LEN GOULD, new editor of the *People*, has celebrated his appointment by disappearing immediately on holiday. Since he hasn't hired a deputy yet, he is leaving the paper in the hands of its picture editor, Paul Bennett.

One can only hope he won't regret it. Journalistically, Bennett is something of an unknown quantity: at the *People*, he is famous chiefly for the enthusiasm with which he throws himself into fashion shoots involving male models, whom he often assists with their wardrobe, hair and make-up.

Bennett is so spectacularly camp that hacks have already proposed renaming the paper for the duration of his acting editorship — to the *Village People*.



DISTRESSING news from the editorial offices of *Hello!* magazine, where thieves recently broke in and stole the computers.

"Alas," said a mole, "it was only the hardware. They left the disks with all the copy on them." Obviously a professional job – the thieves could spot rubbish a mile off...

***DAILY Express* editor Richard Addiss had the brilliant idea of staging the revived and baffling Beachcomber column as a stage performance at Edinburgh. He then had an even better idea: hiring as director his secretary's best friend from school.**

It will be a lavish first night, costing £40,000, with the paper's number three, Mark "Biscuits" Palmer, flying back for one night from his holiday in Corsica, and the paper's gossip columnist, William O'Hickey, jetting in from Ireland. Richard Addiss will of course avoid the critics' mauling by remaining in the Spanish monastery where he has booked his holiday.

Meanwhile "Biscuits" Palmer has managed to locate his spiffing new company-provided blue, soft-top sports car, which he had temporarily mislaid. Returning home at 5 am after a party, he ran into a bollard in Clapham and a tyre burst. Not knowing how to change the tyre, "Biscuits" abandoned the company car and hailed a taxi.

The following morning Palmer dispatched a secretary, Tamsin, in a taxi to scour Clapham to locate the missing vehicle. The great days of the *Depress* are back!

BOTHAM TO PAY ENORMOUS LEGAL BILL

MORE depressing tidings from Express Newspapers, where the Inland Revenue has belatedly learnt how, a few years ago, the company gave staff free membership of a local gym.

This is a "taxable benefit" and employees now have £150 docked from their pay to cover five years' back tax. Perhaps the revenue will now turn to the executive dining room — where, until its recent closure, executives would entertain one another to lavish lunches and £40 bottles of wine, all at company expense. The back-tax due on this belt-loosening benefit would probably fund a large part of the public sector borrowing requirement.

Still, such grand living is a thing of the past in the *Depress* empire thanks to killjoy Labour peer Lord "Alco" Hollick. He is extending his ban on office boozing from the Express building to trade magazines owned by United Newspapers' subsidiary Miller Freeman.

Last month, without warning, the Miller Freeman's staff club bar was converted overnight into a "coffee bar". As a memo explained: "The closure of the licensed bar has been under consideration for some time as it is not now appropriate in a working environment." Oddly, in the same week Miller Freeman bosses sent out another memo saying they wanted to raise the level of "staff happiness". Er, treble coffees all round, no doubt...

THERE is great excitement at the *Daily Telegraph*'s Peterbore column in the run-up to the publication of Lord Lawson's diet book. Will the fat tome include a recipe for "Lady Lawson's chocolate cake"?

It is unlikely to do so, even though the cake was mentioned endlessly in the *Evening Standard* last year. This was thanks to the ineffably grand David Rennie, who left the *Standard* and now edits the *Hellograph*'s pisspoor Peterbore.

As he revealed to surprised dinner pals the other night, when at the *Standard* he "made it up". "It had the ring of truth," explained Rennie, "and it sounded fun." Which is more than one can say for Peterbore.

IN A full-page shock-horror story two weeks ago, the London *Evening Standard* exposed the "scandal" of bureau de change operators who "prey on tourists" by charging "vastly inflated commissions". Several guilty firms were duly fingered.

Surprisingly, however, the article failed to mention a company known as "The Change Group", whose shop at Marble Arch levies a whacking 8.75 per cent service charge. The shop in question was officially opened on 26 June at a splendid ceremony presided over by one Ian Pay — who just happens to be the managing director of the *Evening Standard*.

HALLO! THE HEARTWARMING COLUMN

HALLO! THREE cheers for deputy prime minister Michael Heseltine, who has dismissed Tony Blair's policy-making as "dreamt up" over "Chianti and pasta". As they say, never trust a politician who eats foreign food!

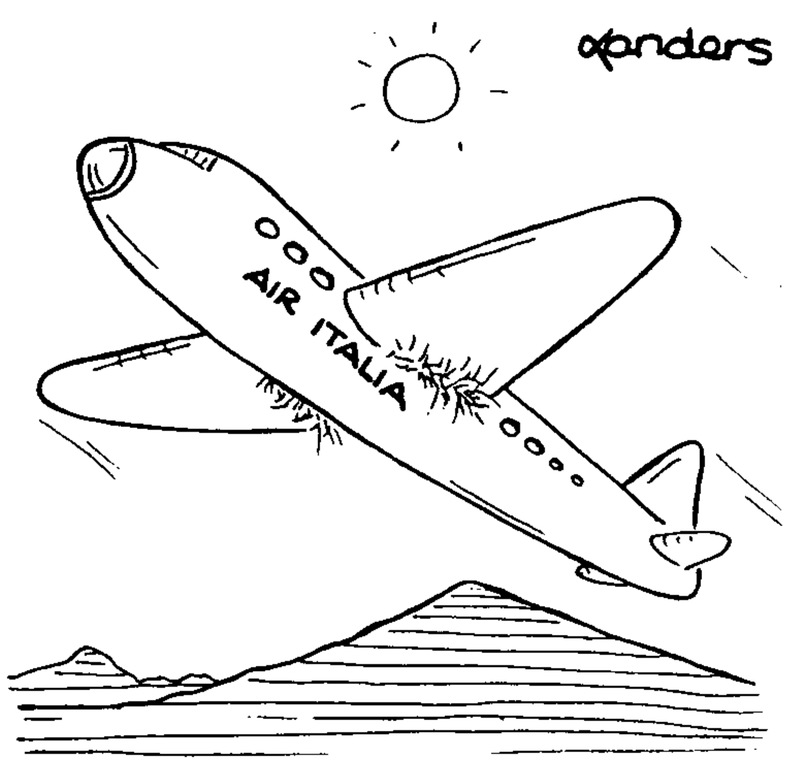
The Marquesa well recalls a tryst on the evening of 9 January 1986 at the Café Italien, a glamorous eaterie in London's Charlotte Street. Nearby sat a vain, ludicrously-coiffed politician who that very morning had flounced out of cabinet in a row over helicopters.

Reptiles from the press were even allowed into the restaurant to photograph him. While the Marquesa stuck doggedly to her mineral water and green salad, the magnificently-maned preener at the next table discussed plans to replace the then prime minister as he consumed, er, Chianti and pasta! Needless to say, this grotesque self-publicist soon sank without trace!

HALLO! SIR Edward Heath was not only freeloader paid by the Moonies last week to attend their absurd "Summit Council for World Peace" in Washington. Professor Richard Whitfield, megalomaniac warden of St George's House, Windsor, the unhappy religious "think tank" founded by Prince Philip (see *Eyes passim*), had all his expenses paid, even managing to upgrade to first class.

Prof Whitfield, who received an invite from the sinister Rev. Sun Myung Moon personally, is a ferocious "family values" zealot, so he undoubtedly got on famously with the tax-dodging Moon, who organizes mass weddings (25,000 a time) of people who have never met before. The fact that the Moonies, in a famous 1981 high court action, were deemed an organization that "broke up families" is clearly an irrelevance!

Meanwhile the long awaited *third* inquiry into Prof Whitfield's treatment of staff (a committee including Baroness Cox and Labour frontbencher Paul Boeteng, commissioned by Prince Philip last December) came to a decision weeks ago — but in the finest tradition of the church, it still refuses to say what it is!



HALLO! TO WINDSOR for the celeb-packed Cartier International Day at the Guards Polo Club, presided over by Brenda herself. After the polo, in Cartier's lavish hospitality tent, I chat with dear Elton John. It is tricky to get close to little Elton, as he's surrounded by six identically dressed, giant black bodyguards. Later, as they sit down to eat with Elton and his handsome friend David Furnish at their own round table, these uniform bruisers also appear to practise synchronised eating.

"Oooh," squeals Jilly Cooper, "look at Elton's fairy ring!"

HALLO! SINCE talented young Mark Thatcher fled to South Africa (to escape tax evasion charges in the United States), there has been such a distressing lack of news, one even considered dispatching a search party to the Dark Continent.

At last, however, a sighting — in Botswana! Guests at the luxury game lodge, Chobe National Park, were recently astonished to see the staff lined up to greet the great man, who boomed: "I'm Mark Thatcher!"

The boy was accompanied by a guide and regular minder, but not, alas, his lovely wife Diane. Mark proceeded to woo staff and guests alike with his renowned charm. Boarding a boat for a river trip, with minders and thousands of pounds worth of photographic equipment, he screamed at fellow passengers who obscured his view of hippos and crocs.

After dark, round the camp fire, conversation turned to international politics. "When my mother speaks," thundered Mark, "everyone listens."

Deep in the bush, a hyena laughed.

HALLO! *ONE'S artistic friends at Whitmoor Prison, Cambridgeshire, are agog with exciting musical developments from the cell of serial killer Dennis Nilsen. "Des", as he likes to be called, has composed no fewer than 70 "symphonic suites"!*

Nilsen, who confessed to 16 murders, plays on a synthesizer. Thanks to the help of the saintly Lord Longford, his cell is fitted out with amplifier, microphone and eight-track mixing desk. Now "Des" has recorded his "symphonic suites"' on to CD and there are hopes of a public release!

HALLO! TO the BBC, where Lord "Grey" Gowrie, chairman of the Arts Council, is being kitted out to play his kilted and reputedly vampiric ancestor Lord Ruthven in a documentary on the Gothic novel.

"Grey" has found a colourful way to celebrate and is having a number of kilts run up in the family tartan for his personal use. But what, the Marquesa wants to know, will Britain's arts supremo keep hidden in his furry sporran? Certainly not money, say others at the BBC who complain loudly at Gowrie's decision to veto lottery funding for another BBC film, this time on the life of Francis Bacon.

Production of John Maybury's low budget *Love Is The Devil* had been agreed by both BBC Films and the British Film Institute, and the lottery was to provide only a small proportion of the budget. Gowrie, however, feels it's too early for Bacon to be portrayed on either the big or the small screen.

The BBC and BFI will appeal against this strange decision — which might be confused with censorship by those who, unlike the Marquesa, have no understanding of the art world.

"Are we there yet, Dad?"

HALLO! THE Marquesa is anxious to reassure impecunious Jane Ward, the former lover of Prince Charles who is writing a "tasteful" memoir of their romance, about her choice of publisher: Mr John Blake, former pop writer, editor of the *People* and distinguished man of letters, is an excellent choice.

Of course there are those who disagree — like Det Con Keith Charles, the paranormal policeman who was less than happy with Blake Publishing's treatment of his biography, *Psychic Cop*.

In fact it was all a misunderstanding — a bit like the agreement between Blake and John Major's biographer Nesta Wyn Ellis, whose commission to write an "amusing" guide to the British bachelor became bogged down in rows about money and ghost-writers and was eventually pulped. No, dear Jane — who is already being visited by bailiffs — has nothing to fear at all. She will probably end up as popular as, well, as Anna Pasternak and James Hewitt.

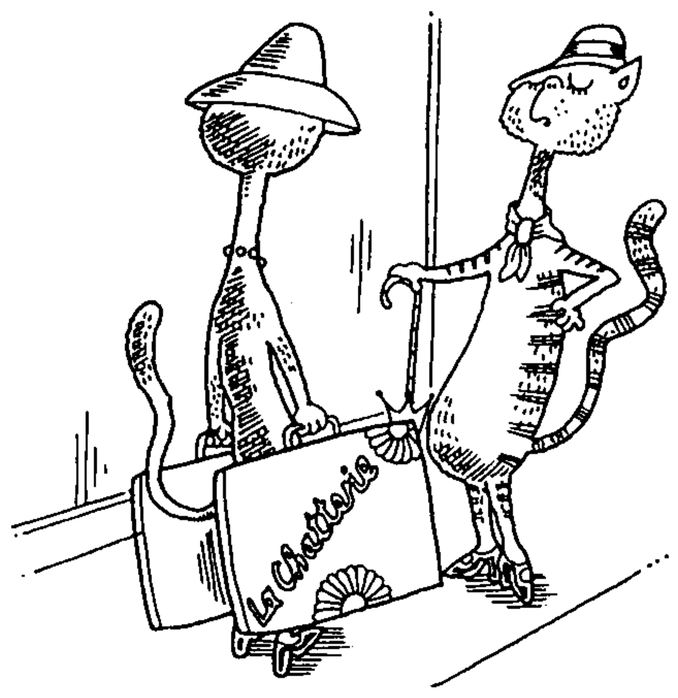
HALLO! *PRINCE Charles's bluff private secretary, Commander Richard Aylard, is blissfully unaware of the ambitions of his proposed assistant press secretary at St James Palace.*

Charming Mark Boland, current director of the Press Complaints Commission, will be sliding over to Brian's offices this autumn (see last Eye) and has been confiding to friends that he already has his eye on the commander's job.

As Aylard is the booby who persuaded the witless Brian to confess all on TV to Jonathan Dimbleby, this would seem to be a splendid plot!

'The Marquesa'

Pre-School Nursery Facility Rhymes



Pussy cat, pussy cat, where have you been?
I've been at *L'Égout,* where *everyone's* seen.
Pussy cat, pussy cat, was it nice food?
No, but ***hugely*** expensive and the
waiters *were* rude.

Summer Special

IN THE TEAROOM
(temporarily relocated to Tuscany)

THE ambition of Kim "new Labour" Howells appears to have no limits.

Having announced via the *New Statesman* that he was not terribly interested in being Welsh secretary — "It's a very small cultural elite that runs Wales," he said, "and it would drive me demented. I'd be tempted to take a vacuum cleaner to it really" — the question is: what would he really like to do?

Howells' conversion to competition and Adam Smith may shock old Labourites, but it is music to the ears of the "dear leader", who would prefer someone of Howells' stature to the unreconstructed Margaret Beckett, who currently holds the trade and industry brief. But in order to get there, Howells would have to get past the brooding figure of the shadow chancellor, Gordon Brown.

"Big" Gordon is still furious with Howells for attempting to undermine his plans for a windfall tax on the utilities, and will determinedly move to crush Kim if he pushes his luck too far. Meanwhile, students of lefty history who perused the pages of the current issue of the *New Statesman*, will have been amazed to read Howells' claim that at the end of the 1984-5 pit strike "he took his men back to work without a settlement". This claim was too much for some South Wales union officials who actually did take the men back to work, and who remember Howells as a lowly union research officer.

And then there is Kim Howells waxing lyrical about his visit to the worker-owned Tower colliery in South Wales — "the pit his family worked in" and "which had changed beyond measure" as miners swapped past militancy for a keen interest "in the price of coal on the spot market". Tower's miners have special cause to remember Kim: in their desperate bid to keep the pit open and run it themselves, he advised them to accept closure and redundancy. When two years ago the South Wales miners were given the freedom of the city of Cardiff, Kim gave the contingent from Tower a wide berth. A good job. They had happily declared that they would "string the boyo up" if he attempted to march under their banner.

'Rainsboro'

RATHER than vote against the government 50 Tory MPs performed a consummate U-turn on the involvement of pensioners in occupational pension schemes.

The government originally promised that pensioners should have the same rights as everyone else in the schemes to nominate and vote for trustees. Employers weren't at all happy with this promise. They prefer trustees to be elected solely by people who are employed by them (and therefore can more easily be bribed and bullied by them). They lobbied away at the government, which as usual collapsed and produced a statutory instrument which effectively barred pensioner members from nominating or voting for trustees.

This set off a howl of protest from Labour, Liberals and even some Tory backbenchers. On 29 March, Michael Stern MP (Tory, Bristol North West) tabled an early-day motion deploring the new regulations which "in the wake of the Maxwell affair may provide a loophole for delinquent employers to avoid the independent scrutiny of a pensioner trustee"; and calling on the government to "reconsider". Fifty one Tory MPs, including Mr Stern, signed the motion. The government remained absolutely committed to the cause of the delinquent employer, however, and refused to budge.

The matter came to the floor of the Commons on 9 July when the Labour and Liberal parties supported a motion to revoke the new regulations and come back with new ones with more rights for pensioner trustees. Only one Tory MP, Andrew Bowden (Brighton, Kemptown), supported the motion. The other 50 loyally trooped into the lobbies for the government, and the motion was defeated by 17 votes (271 to 254).

HOW touched the pensioners of Milton Keynes must have been at the last election when the successful Tory candidate Barry Legg promised them "security in retirement" in his manifesto: "Those who have dedicated their lives to the service of the community deserve that stability," it explained, tear-jerkingly.

But the wrinklies of Milton Keynes weren't half as touched as the 2,000 pensioners of Hillsdown Holdings had been just three years earlier — for £18 million. Last week the high court found that Hillsdown directors unlawfully removed the money from their pension fund to prop up the company's pisspoor bottom line.

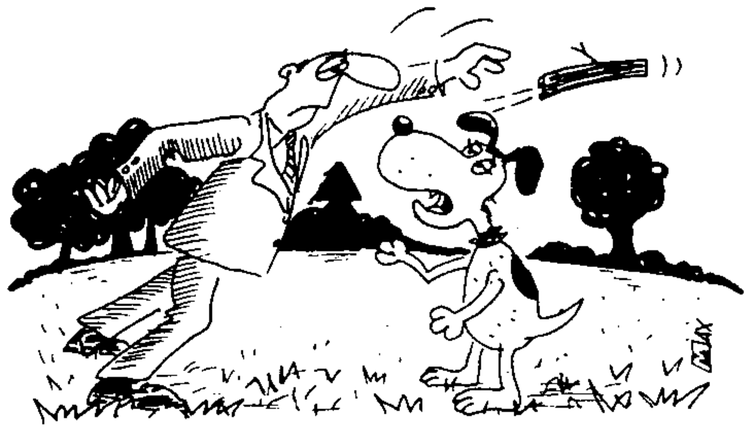
And who was the £120,000-a-year director of Hillsdown at the time? Er, step forward Barry Legg!

DEFENCE secretary Michael Portillo is trying to renege on government promises made in 1987 to honour redundancy agreements at the royal dockyard at Rosyth.

Babcock International, operating the yard on behalf of the ministry of defence in advance of privatisation, politely refused to honour the agreement on the very sensible grounds that it would prefer the British taxpayer to pick up the full tab.

So Rosyth workers have been offered a 40 per cent buy-out of their current redundancy

A POLITICAL ANIMAL



"I'm glad you've asked me to fetch that stick, my record shows increases in real terms of stick fetching, cat-chasing, and the provision of homes and jobs for thousands of fleas"

entitlements. The £48.9 million needed will come from the MoD. The offer is a sweetener to allow privatisation to go ahead, but it has not yet been accepted by the Scottish workforce.

Meanwhile in Devonport, Plymouth's royal dockyard, workers have been pressing Devonport Management Limited for guarantees that their redundancy agreements will not also be altered.

JULIAN BRAZIER, Conservative MP for Canterbury and John Redwood's most trusted lieutenant, appears to have become a secret Portillo supporter.

He spearheaded the backbench revolt against the sale of 58,000 ministry of defence married quarters (declaring: "I'll go to the stake on this one"), and then to his constituents' astonishment abstained in the crucial debate leaving heroic MP Cyril Townsend alone on the moral high ground.

Meanwhile in the Lords debate army families suspected a conspiracy when the crustiest Tory peers were wheeled out to vote on the MoD sales. Just as the speeches on behalf of the services families were due to start, the Tories all left for a meeting of the Association of Conservative Peers, with guests including John Major. Fortunately their meeting finished just in time to come back in to vote against the amendment to the sale. What a coincidence!

JUST FANCY THAT!

"LIVING in the Labour Party involves living in two different worlds. In the real world, meetings are friendly and pleasant, we get on well together, we have a shared determination to win and occasionally we have a grumble which, once voiced, is dealt with and resolved. The Labour Party we read about in the press is much less pleasant. It gives an impression of unending conflict and authoritarianism."

— Clare Short MP, Tribune, 5 July

"I must admit that, if I had a daughter, I would advise her not to go into politics. It is just too nasty and hurtful."

— Clare Short MP, Daily Express, 26 July, just after the friendly and pleasant Tony Blair had sacked her as shadow transport minister

WHEN Tony Blair decided to replace Clare Short as shadow transport spokeswoman, he and his whips and spin doctors had many obedient MPs to choose from. The one they preferred was Andrew Smith, treasury-trained, greyest of the grey and a safe pair of hands. Except for one quirk.

He lists "the car industry" as his primary "special interest" in the reference books, which, for a party committed to getting people and goods off the roads and on to the railway, seems a little unusual. But not for Mr Smith. His constituency of Oxford East includes one of the last remnants of the British car industry, the huge plant at Cowley, which turns out Rover 500s and 600s and employs 5,000 people.

With their dependents, that represents 12,000-15,000 voters. And Mr Smith's majority at the last election was 7,500. An interesting election looms for Oxford.

JOHN KENT PRESENTS
JOHN MAJOR'S SENSATIONAL BIG TOP CIRCUS & MENAGERIE
THE AD CAMPAIGN
THIS IS TO SCARE THE VOTERS!
New Labour: New Danger.
THIS IS TO REASSURE THEM!
Same old Tory Same old story
BLAH!

H P *(Continued)*

MICHAEL STEPHEN, the Tory MP for Shoreham, has asked many parliamentary questions since joining the Commons in 1992.

For example, in 1992 he asked the transport secretary if "he will introduce a public register of motor vehicles on lease or hire purchase"; and in 1993 he asked the home office if it "will establish a national computer database for the immediate registration of bail orders".

What do these have in common? Both would require private companies to set up large computer systems to run the schemes. PS: Stephen is an adviser to EDS Scicon Ltd, part of the giant American computer company best known for snapping up so many government contracts.

● THE last *Eye* pointed out to junior minister Andrew Mitchell that although he berated Liberal Democrat MPs for asking questions critical of the Child Support Agency, Tories MPs were just as critical of the agency.

On the day the *Eye* story appeared, Mitchell was plagued by the Tory member for Bedfordshire, Sir David Madel, standing up in the House and asking social security minister Alistair Burt why the CSA computer was mixing parents' basic pay and overtime, thus adding to the number of incorrect maintenance assessments — already running at 350,000.

Now that the American computer giant EDS, which runs the CSA's disastrous system, has been named as a contender for the contract to administer child benefit, the company feels all should be forgotten about its CSA performance. Managing director of EDS's social security division, Alan Stevens, wrote to various MPs who had raised questions about EDS's performance (141 parliamentary questions in the last year, in fact) suggesting they meet for a discussion. These MPs' negative questions had apparently proved to Mr Stevens that they had been "misinformed". His company had, after all, "successfully" provided the CSA with its computer system. Er, quite.

A LOCAL politician who wanted to join Sir Jammy Fishpaste's Referendum party and get on its prospective parliamentary candidate's list found it hard to reach the party and so eventually wrote to the billionaire grocer at his Mexico home asking for his views on Europe.

He was soon contacted by a woman at the party's Westminster office. He asked her if it was the Referendum party's aim to take Britain out of Europe. "Yes," was her instant reply. He was then passed to Ian Pennington, in charge of candidate selection.

"So you want to get out of Europe?" asked the hopeful candidate. "Who said that?" snorted Pennington. "We just want a referendum for the people to decide, but we don't know what we will ask yet." The bewildered prospective candidate was so impressed by the billionaire's clever ideas and smooth admin he withdrew his application.

IN the wake of MPs awarding themselves 26 percent pay rises, Hartley Booth, the Conservative MP for Finchley who is famous for the poems he wrote to a female Commons researcher, telephoned the *Eye* offices specifically to explain that he gave part of his own salary to charity.

Some nasty tabloids had apparently suggested he was some kind of greedy fatcat, when nothing could be further from the truth. As Hartley said: "I give the net parliamentary pay rises above inflation to charity: this year I will be helping children and adults with autism."

Pressed for details about the charities and how long this benevolence had been going on for, Hartley was overcome with modesty and merely murmured: "I like to be quite private about my charitable work."

CHANNEL 4's *Downward Nobility* documentary featured the eccentric Sophie Buchan Watt, a go-go dancer and cousin of aristocratic Scottish office minister, Lord James Douglas Hamilton.

The programme will have been watched closely by Labour bigwig and ex-boss of the Edinburgh Tourist Board George Kerevan, who was recently welcomed into the bosom of the Scottish National party. This raised the hackles of some Nats who recall George's fondness for the Buchan Watt bosom.

Two years ago, and by his own admission, Kerevan gave hundreds of pounds to the blue-blooded stripper. Indeed, so taken was he that he watched her strut her stuff in a seedy Edinburgh go-go bar and lavished her with champagne. The married ex-councillor denied he was having an affair with the toff tottie, saying: "I did not have sex with her. I tried to be her friend."

The friendship seems to have had a curious effect on George's legendary expertise as an economics lecturer. For he confessed: "I gave her hundreds of pounds for a picture which I never got. I never expected anything else."

"Look! I think Lassie wants us to follow her"

A PARLIAMENTARY delegation of six travelled from Britain recently to Kuwait, Oman and Dubai. There were three Tory MPs: John Townend (Bridlington); Harry Greenway (Ealing North); Matthew Banks (Southport); a Tory peer, Baroness Flather; a Welsh Nationalist MP, Elsyn Llywd (Meirionnydd Nant Conwy); and Labour MP Peter Snape (West Bromwich East).

The group was "sponsored" (ie all its expenses were paid) by the Interparliamentary Union, which takes a very relaxed view of voting rights in the countries it sponsors for MPs' freebies. In "free" Kuwait, for instance, women don't vote and only first degree males whose ancestors were in Kuwait before 1920 can vote or stand for the assembly.

Harry Greenway cheerfully told a delegation of angry women who were worried about discrimination in the university that his mother had been a suffragette; and John Townend wrote a glittering account of the visit in the monthly bulletin published in London for the Kuwaiti government. "One thing impressed me personally," he drooled. He had woken up one morning with an earache. He was rushed to hospital were he was "cured in about 15 minutes". Amazing what these Gulf chaps can do nowadays — especially for MPs who sing to their emir's tune.

TO ACCOMPANY the devastating Amnesty International report on executions, torture and indiscriminate arrests of dissidents in the Gulf state of Bahrein, Bahreini exiles in Britain have released the awful story of Saeed Al Eskafi, aged 16.

Bahrein's "intelligence" Gestapo — headed by former British army officer Ian Henderson — called at the boy's home at Sanabis on 28 June last year. The boy was not there and his family was told he was wanted by the police. The following day Saeed's father, Abdul Rasool al Eskafi, took him to Henderson's office, where he was detained. Ten days later an official of the ministry of the interior contacted the family to tell them to collect their son since their interrogation was over.

Delighted, the father rushed to the security headquarters where he was directed to the mortuary. There he was shown the dead body of his son, who, he was told, had "died of natural causes". These may have been linked to the swelling of his hands with clotted blood, often associated with enforced hanging from a bar during beatings, and the burns on his body which seemed to have been inflicted by an electric iron. The boy's case has become a symbol of outrage against the Al Khalifa regime in Bahrein and its "intelligence".

The boy's arrest and interrogation seems to have coincided almost exactly with a glittering gathering at Bahrein's Sheraton Hotel attended by two Tory MPs at the expense of the London-based Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies. William Powell (Corby), who was regularly paid by the Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies without declaring the payments, declared a visit the previous month (from 26 to 29 May, 1995) to Bahrein and Kuwait at the expense of the Gulf Centre. Lady Olga Maitland (Sutton and Cheam) was also there, but she declared her visit the Bahrein and Kuwait from 26 May to 30 June — the day Abdul Rasool Al Eskafi took his son to the security services.

'Backbiter'

TERRORISM

DESPITE President Bill Clinton's remarkable moderation in not immediately blaming terrorism for the TWA aircraft explosion, the US *meejah* rumour mill is working hard.

There are of course those who say that if you keep a plane in the air round the clock for a quarter of a century, it may well one day make an unscheduled descent. But there are more sinister rumours, too: the most persistent is an FBI report that the plane was taken out by a stinger missile.

Needless to say, commentators assume that Muslim fundamentalists — who take the blame for everything from global warming to traffic jams in Manhattan — were responsible. If so, it could be embarrassing, for they would have obtained their stingers as part of covert US weapons supply to the "nice" fundamentalists in Afghanistan.

Even more embarrassing, however, is the suggestion that US military exercises in the vicinity — which provided some of the witnesses — may somehow have accidentally provided the missile. It is of course a completely scandalous suggestion to make against the armed forces... even if they did once accidentally bring down an Iranian airliner over the Gulf.

LEADERS of nasty, dictatorial regimes in developing countries who are anxious about their image abroad need look no further than the *Observer* and the ridiculous weekly "foreign report" supplements it carries.

Produced by a PR firm called Images. Words. Ltd — a company with a track record in arselicking unpleasant governments — the reports are bursting with the sort of good news that will surprise *Observer* hacks who might once have reported from these countries.

The most recent beneficiaries of this investigative journalism include Ghana ("African jewel continues to outshine neighbours"), where a policy of arbitrary detention attracts the unwelcome interest of Amnesty International if not Images. Words. Ltd; and the Ivory Coast ("striding firmly along the road to the 21st century"), whose policy of executing robbers by firing squad is not mentioned either.

Man jailed for being a garden fence

Kent Messenger

EYE TV

Olympic Grandstand (BBC1 and 2)

FOR Linford Christie and Roger Black the centennial Olympics turned out to be one games too many. They had to settle for less than their previous heights. The same — unfortunately — was true for the BBC sports team.

Atlanta 96 was always going to be a tricky proposition for the corporation because of time difference. This was not a problem with football's 1994 American world cup because afternoon matches in the States fell into GMT peak-time. But the world cup was not tailored for American television — which scarcely covered it — whereas the 1996 Olympics are essentially a creature of NBC, which bought the American TV rights.

NBC steered the big events into its own peak-time — between 7-10pm EST — which means midnight to 3am in Britain. So the poor old BBC has ended up paying £30 million for programming to be shown in the Open University slots. They have been beaten by the clock.

This timing problem has had one particularly unfortunate effect on the coverage. Logically Des Lynam — the best live broadcaster of his generation — must host the main show of the night; but this relegates him to the insomnia slot. The programmes that UK viewers are most likely to watch — the more scheduling-friendly highlights and early slots — are in the hands of his torpid underlings, Steve Rider and Sue Barker.

A further complication has been the poor performance of the British competitors. For all the liberal cant about the regrettable jingoism of international sport, local interest is more or less essential to television sports viewing: the record British audiences for sport are nearly all products of England's world cup run in 1990 and European championship challenge this year. Only at Wimbledon — until this year's advent of Super Tim — have significant numbers of viewers been willing to watch foreign superstars. Poor old BBC: its expensive sporting purchase stuck in graveyard slots and almost no heroic British stories to keep audiences from their beds.

Short of stars of their own, the British cunningly coopted Ireland's triple gold swimmer Michelle Smith to their own gene pool. But here the coverage ran up against the BBC's third handicap of the games: the quality of its commentators. Perhaps in a subconscious attempt to kill off the *Eye*'s Colemanballs column, David Coleman has elected to become incomprehensible. The legendary wobble and slur in his voice at times of high excitement has now become permanent phrase-shake. Even in repose, he sounds like an audio cassette on fast forward. Coleman is 70 now and — as he might put it himself — people are asking whether the big man can still pull it out when he has to.

Coleman's durability is explained by the obvious unsuitability of his understudies for larger tasks. Tony Gubba is obviously assigned the small bore shooting events so the lads in the office can joke about the uncanny match of event and commentator, but that is little compensation when you have to listen to him.

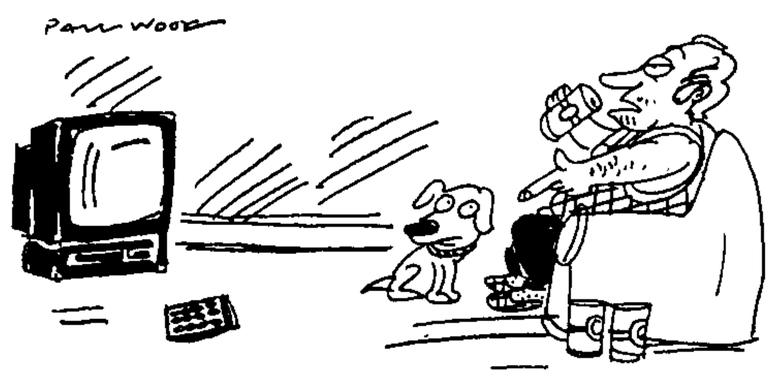
The introduction of tennis to the Olympics has even meant the infliction of a second summer dose of John Barrett, a man whose verbal style has led to calls for compulsory testing of the BBC's commentators for valium use. It is a measure of the sports department's current crisis at the microphone that Barry Davies, a career football commentator moonlighting in his summer hols, has been the most impressive performer at both Wimbledon 96 and Atlanta 96.

After the death of Alan Weeks, Hamilton Bland finds himself aptly though embarrassingly out of his depth at the swimming pool. Bland's big post-win interview with Ireland's triple gold swimmer Michelle Smith was one of the worst ever examples of broadcasting as colonic irrigation. Praising the "tremendous" way she had handled the media attention, he coyly referred to her coach-husband's suspension for drug use as "your husband's problems in the past". When it comes to the question of drug use, sports show interviewers should surely work at a current affairs level of intensity.

However, when, with the bombing of Centennial Park, coverage did merge with current affairs, a different problem was exposed. The sports boys managed fine: Lynam, as he famously showed during the abandoned Grand National, is skilled at the journalism of chaos. The problem was that the BBC's coverage of the bomb — both its home-originated stuff and its handover to the live feeds from CNN and NBC — was yet another terrible warning against the rolling news service to which the Birtist BBC is increasingly committed. Once again, it has been shown that on-the-hoof news produces appalling inaccuracies — the Radio 4 *Today* programme reported 43 killed and 70 critically injured, figures respectively 42 and 69 out — and dangerous hunches: security guard as hero, security guard as bomber.

The 1996 games were supposed to be a showcase for BBC sport. With its loss of contracts to commercial networks, pessimists in the department fear there may soon be insufficient top-rank material to justify *Grandstand* and *Sportsnight* as weekly programmes. They may end up like ITV's *World of Sport* in the 70s, screening beach volleyball and cliff diving from Malibu. But — because of time, British performers and a shortage of commentators — the showcase has become a showdown.

'Square Eyes'



"Fetch!"

MEDIA NEWS

"ATLANTA will provide a huge challenge," Radio 5 Live controller Jenny Abramsky advised her staff just before the Olympics. "Every programme is committed to some coverage and reliant on every lucky person who is in Atlanta for the station. Make it a lot of fun."

And what a lot of lucky people there were: in spite of John Birt's cost-cutting zeal, no fewer than 82 of Abramsky's staff from BBC radio flew out to join the "fun". Is this a new olympic record?

WHILE enjoying a well-earned break at the £240-a-night Quisisana Hotel on Capri, L!VE TV supremo Kelvin Mackenzie rang his brother Drew, a New York-based hack, and mentioned that he'd seen Oprah Winfrey by the swimming pool.

Drew could hardly contain his excitement. Only that morning a sleazy US tabloid, the *Star*, had offered $500 to any reader who spotted a "celebrity" on holiday. Seizing the chance of a fast buck, Drew immediately rang the *Star* to claim his reward — adding that Kelvin would be happy to confirm the story.

When the *Star* contacted him in Capri, motormouth Mackenzie was outraged. "That slippery lump of dogshit, my bruvver, called you didn't he?" he roared from his hotel room. "Don't pay him any tip fee; send it to me. He's already got too much money. He doesn't need any more — he only wastes it on expensive cars."

Unsurprisingly, Drew had other ideas. "Kelvin's not getting that cheque — I am," he insisted last week. "My bruvver's done a million favours for me in my life," he added sweetly, "and this was another one. That's what bruvvers are for."

EXCITING news from the world of cyberspace: the much-coveted "UK Web Awards" for 1996 have been announced.

Three of the six winners are: the online *Times* newspaper; the *Electronic Telegraph*; and the Condé Nast On-Line web site.

Three of the six judges are: Andrew Burke, internet manager of News Corporation and creator of the online *Times* newspaper; Ben Rooney, creator of the *Electronic Telegraph*; and Jackie Euwe, commercial director of Condé Nast On-Line.

Hearty congratulations to all concerned.

I-BSkyB

I'M bound, of course, not to discuss my court case last week at all.

But I would like to thank Sky TV for the invaluable help that watching all those episodes of Murder One gave me as I faced the witness box.

PAULA YATES
The Sun

GOLF addicts didn't get much of a deal from the BBC.

Over four days of the U.S. Masters, the BBC — which had exclusive rights — showed less than 10 hours' play.

Contrast that to last autumn's coverage of the Ryder Cup, when Sky showed virtually every shot.

And yet there is a huge fuss over satellite TV showing exclusive sports events. Why...

When they do it so much better?

The Sun

CONTRIBUTORS: Mark Ruston, James Lalor

An occasional column for which readers are invited to submit Sky-plugs masquerading as news items in Murdoch papers. The usual £10 will be paid.

BBC Wales's newly promoted head of drama, Karl "Bald Eagle" Francis, has a proven track record of commissioning new scripts from hopeful writers.

One such scriptwriter, Duncan Williams, was invited for lunch with the great man a few summers ago to discuss a screenplay he had submitted to the Beeb. Francis was already enjoying an alfresco lunch with a thespian friend when Williams sat down. It soon became evident that he had not even read the script, so between bites of barbecued lamb and assuring the writer that he was a skilled "speed reader", he began to leaf through the treatment.

When Francis agreed that the story had considerable merit, Williams pulled out a legal document to cover sale of the project to BBC Wales. Upon sight of this Francis yelled at him to "Fuck Off!" and "Leave the table at once!" He then ripped the contract to pieces in front of the entire restaurant and his bewildered actor friend.

With a degree of foresight, Williams had brought a duplicate copy of the agreement which he proffered once again to the reddened Francis, then made a hasty exit. The script remains unproduced. It is about Welsh people, failed communication and rage. Perhaps Williams should ask the newly promoted Francis what he has done with it.

JUST FANCY THAT!

CONNECTED, the *Daily Telegraph*'s internet supplement, celebrated the British "success story" of computer games company Eidos, praising "the mastermind behind this phenomenal growth", chief executive Charles Cornwall.

The *Torygraph* business pages, meanwhile, had a different perspective. "Eidos plunges into the red," said the headline over a report on how the "computer game and technology minnow Eidos" had announced "higher-than-expected pre-tax losses of £1.95 million".

Some "success story".

I-I-I Special

THIS issue's Kim Jong II Award for outstanding self-promotion goes to Great Helmswoman and Data Protection Registrar Elizabeth France, whose likeness appears an uplifting ten times (twice full page) in her own annual report.

A MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST (4)

FOR THE past two years the official solicitor has been strenuously (and successfully) trying to prevent ITV showing a documentary about the pioneering work of Professor Reuven Feuerstein, the Israeli psychologist who has helped many disturbed or mentally handicapped children to lead normal lives.

The reason is simple: one of Feuerstein's most celebrated clients was Flora Keays, the daughter of Sara Keays and Cecil Parkinson, and under a gagging order imposed in 1993 the media are officially banned from "the publication of any information, in whatever form" about Flora.

Last weekend, however, the *Sunday Telegraph* carried a long feature about Prof Feuerstein which drew attention to the miraculous results he achieved with Flora Keays: during three months at his institute in Jerusalem, she was transformed from a child who couldn't sit still or concentrate for more than 30 seconds into a young girl who loved lessons and was able to listen and learn.

This, of course, was precisely the point the television documentary wished to make, with the full cooperation of Sara and Flora. And yet, for their pains, the film's producers have been pursued through the courts by the tireless official solicitor, whose determination to suppress the programme has run up legal bills of many thousands of pounds.

So then: will he now prosecute the *Sunday Telegraph* for its flagrant breach of the injunction? Possible, but unlikely. Earlier this year, when several newspapers broke the gagging order by writing about Sara Keays and her daughter, he sent a furious letter to Fleet Street editors warning them that they were in contempt of court and could expect dire legal consequences. Since then, however, he has failed to carry out his threat — presumably because he realised it would be the most pointless and embarrassing exercise in stable-door bolting since the *Spycatcher* fiasco.

"Now, old Commander Bond here likes his Horlicks shaken, not stirred."

Which makes the continuing ban on television coverage even more untenable: how can ITV be prevented from mentioning Flora's education at a time when the same subject has been discussed at great length in the national press? Having been refused permission to appeal to the House of Lords, Sara Keays and the programme-makers are now taking their case to Europe, where they have every expectation of success. Both legal logic and commonsense suggest that the official solicitor should drop his opposition now, thereby saving a lot of time and public money. However, since logic and sense have been conspicuously absent throughout this sorry saga, he will probably do nothing of the sort.

HACKWATCH: BAZ BAMIGBOYE

FILLING a show-business column every Friday isn't as simple as it looks, even for the *Daily Mail*'s Baz Bamigboye, the man who — as he is wont to remind us — once danced with Madonna.

Fortunately his task is made easier by the unending torrent of PR material supplied to him by leading West End publicist Peter Thompson, who represents both Cameron Mackintosh and Andrew Lloyd Webber.

Throughout 1994, for instance, Baz chronicled Mackintosh's preparations for a revival of *Oliver!* Last year it was Lloyd Webber's turn: when not plugging the New York production of *Sunset Boulevard*, Baz started hyping up the movie of *Evita*, with Madonna in the title role. ("I danced with the woman once.")

And so to 1996...

12 January: Sir Cameron Mackintosh has joined Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber in the ranks of the theatrical knights, and Baz is quick to offer his congratulations. In the interests of balance, however, he hastily adds a puff for Lloyd Webber's show *Whistle Down the Wind* and manages to get in an early mention of the revival of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, due to open later in the year.

26 April: "The most enjoyable time I had this week was to spend an afternoon with Cameron Mackintosh, when he gave me an exclusive preview of some of the score from the new Alain Boublil and Claude-Michel Schonberg musical, *Martin Guerre*." It was, apparently, a "mesmeric" experience. "It's early days but what the heck, it sounds like a hit to me." Attaboy.

7 June: "Theatrical knights Cameron Mackintosh and Andrew Lloyd Webber have always been rivals, sometimes friendly, sometimes not so close. So Lloyd Webber may not be pleased to learn that in the high-stakes world of major musicals, he's about to be swept off centre stage by the sheer vivacity and melodic excitement of his rival Mackintosh's £3.75 million musical *Martin Guerre*." After attending an early rehearsal, the great columnist thinks *Martin Guerre* "the surest surefire hit to head into the West End for a long time". Before Sir Andrew can take offence, however, Baz gives him a quick plug too: "Lloyd Webber seems to be saving all his innovative talent for his musical of *Whistle Down the Wind*, which is due to be seen first in New York at the end of the year."

21 June: *Martin Guerre*, "the West End's most eagerly awaited musical", starts previews tonight. "The real test will come when the critics see it on 10 July. I think it will be around for some considerable time."

5 July: As the cast of *Martin Guerre* prepares for the first night, Baz offers a preliminary verdict: "My view, which may not be shared by everyone, is that *Martin Guerre* is a stunningly different breath of fresh air in the West End." Who would have guessed it? Meanwhile, to keep Peter Thompson's other client happy, Baz also attends the first-night party for Lloyd Webber's *By Jeeves*, and chats to the composer's "feisty and wickedly funny wife, Madeleine".

12 July: The critics have given *Martin Guerre* a dreadful pasting. For Baz, however, who exercised his critical faculties after attending "Cameron Mackintosh's exuberant opening gala party", it is quite simply "the most exciting new musical to open in London for ages". He takes this opportunity to remind us of what else is coming on the musical calendar: "*Jesus Christ Superstar* this winter at the Lyceum." Oh, and *Oliver!* is still running at the Palladium — produced, lest we forget, by Cameron Mackintosh.

19 July: Great news: a revival of *Jesus Christ Superstar* is opening at the Lyceum this winter. *(You've done this already. — Ed.)* With his customary gift for a pithy phrase, Baz describes the show as a work of "divine inspiration".

26 July: "Call me obsessed, but I have been back to see... *Martin Guerre*, at the Prince Edward Theatre in London, and I still contend it's the best new show in town. Although it's set in 16th-century France, it speaks, to me anyway, of many of the burning issues of today..." Including, presumably, the burning issue of how many times he can promote the show before his column is officially redesignated as an advertising supplement.

2 August: "Baz Bamigboye is away." A nation mourns...

NOOKS and CORNERS

IS English Heritage in the pay of the IRA? The question might seem absurd until one contemplates the lengths Sir Jocelyn Stevens's quango is prepared to go to assist the IRA's mission to destroy England's historic buildings.

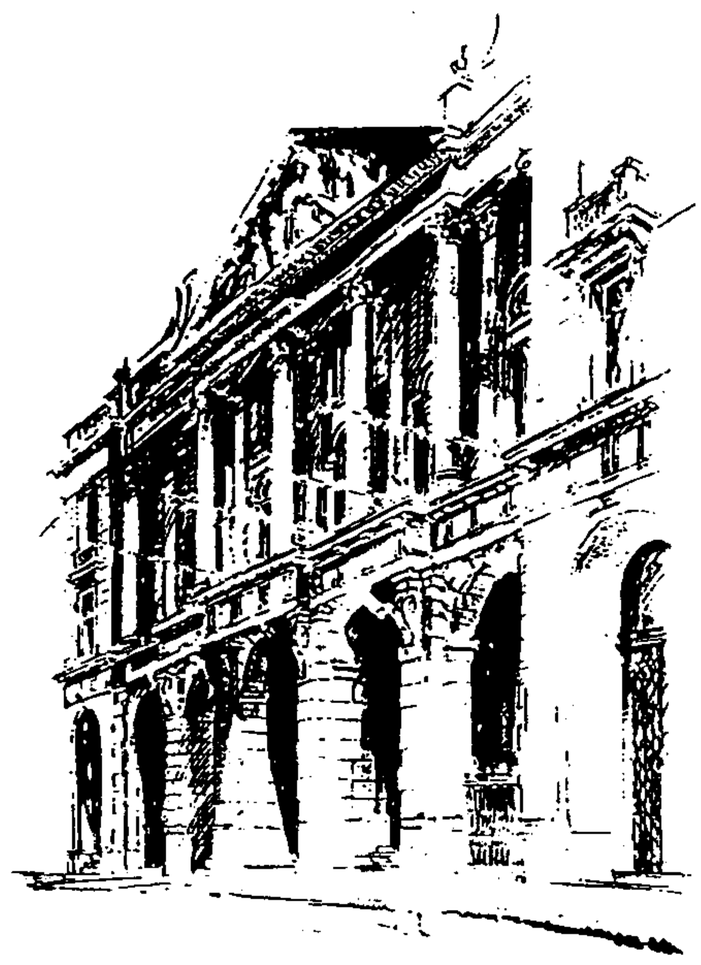
First, there is English Heritage's extraordinary opposition to the proposal to restore St Ethelburga's, Bishopsgate, and its support of Anthony Blee's bastard rebuilding scheme (*Eyes passim ad nauseam*). Now it has been revealed that it is taking active steps to encourage the redevelopment of the site of the bomb-damaged Baltic Exchange.

The Baltic Exchange, a listed palace of commerce designed by Smith & Wimble and built in 1900-03, fell victim not to the IRA bomb that did for poor old St Ethelburga's but to the earlier 1992 IRA bomb that also seriously damaged another medieval church, St Helen's, Bishopsgate, (so allowing it to be reconstructed and sterilised as a Protestant conventicle by God's Own Architect, Quinlan Terry).

The Exchange was so badly hit that its solid Edwardian granite facade was made unsafe. The Baltic Exchange — motto: "Our Word Our Bond" — then spent some £3 million on dismantling and preserving the material of the listed structure.

At first the intention was to rebuild and restore the grand facade in St Mary Axe and the trading floor behind, and English Heritage was firm, not to say intransigent, in insisting upon total restoration. For when the Baltic Exchange asked for flexibility in planning because rebuilding the original "box" of offices above the main building would be surplus to requirements and would place 35,000 sq ft of offices on a saturated market, English Heritage would not tolerate compromise. Eventually — inevitably? — the Exchange concluded that it could not afford a full restoration and decided instead to sell the freehold of the site, so transferring to a new owner the obligation of reconstructing the important parts of the listed building.

This was naturally viewed "with concern" by both EH and the City. And when an agreement was reached with Trafalgar House to exchange the Exchange with 38 St Mary Axe, Stephen Dorrell, then secretary of state for national heritage, wrote to the chief executive on 8 September 1994: "My concern now of course is that Trafalgar House and the City Corporation should reach agreement on the implementation of an appropriate scheme which will restore the principal elements of the Old Baltic Exchange as an important grade II listed building. As my department's professional advisers on the built heritage, English Heritage will of course be doing all they can to help them achieve this objective."



How short memories are. A scheme with planning consent by GMW architects for restoration and redevelopment has now been abandoned by Trafalgar House, which now intends clearing the site and building a 1,080 feet high skyscraper — twice the height of the National Westminster Tower and the tallest in Europe — proposed by the design machine fronted by Sir Norman Foster. Who else? Naturally the City likes this as it will overshadow the Canary Wharf tower; but what is incredible is that English Heritage is now actively supporting this puerile architectural gesture. So much for historic buildings.

On 22 March Paul "The Gerbil" Drury, director of EH's London & South-East region, told the City that the bomb damage was even worse than supposed and that "the consented scheme is a somewhat uncomfortable amalgam... The case for a wholly new building would be greatly strengthened by the employment of an architect of international repute, to produce a comparable scheme of real quality..." Well, as we know, that is just weaselspeak for wheeling on one of those safe, knighted superstars who operate in a realm above criticism where they are unchallenged idolised geniuses: Richard Rogers and Norman Foster

When, at the second Poultry public inquiry, Mrs Thatcher's lackeys decided to oblige My Lord Palumbo by arguing that eight listed buildings could be swept away because the replacement was of such outstanding quality, we were assured that this was a one-off special decision which would not set a precedent. Some hope: all a clever developer now has to do to get rid of a tiresome listed building is to commission a "masterpiece" by Richard or Norman — as if those bloated and spoilt cats were not already doing fine out of the lottery, thank you very much.

Such is the moral decadence within the introverted and self-satisfied world of British architecture; but that is not my point. My point is that rules imposed by English Heritage which inhibited the Baltic Exchange from rebuilding its building have been relaxed for Trafalgar House. Why? It is scarcely fair, after all, especially as the site was sold for some £10 million less than its value because of the requirement to reinstate major elements of the damaged listed building. This fact has not escaped Mr Drury, who suggests that the "windfall profit" enjoyed by Trafalgar House could go to help other important historic buildings "and the obvious beneficiary would be the nascent City Churches Trust..." Well, I suppose that is better than a Swiss bank account.

"We do... have to recognise that situations constantly change..." argues Sir Jocelyn Stevens in excusing his organisation's abandonment of its original intentions so as to oblige Sir Nigel Broackes's company (remember the Firestone Factory?) Aren't we lucky? Thanks to the IRA, the City loses a mere listed building but gains the biggest phallic symbol in Europe and another self-evident work of genius "designed" by our own Sir Norm. I trust that, when the thing is finished in time for the millennium, Mr Gerry Adams is asked to open it.

'Piloti'

Pseuds Corner

In that light, the forthcoming album (by ZZ Top) can be taken as an ennobling attempt to revive basic values. Rhythmeen will be amongst the best-recorded boogie records you'll ever hear. It is loud and lucid — you can actually hear Billy Gibbons's speaker cones popping with overload. And it has enough physicality to it to invite meditation on the wonders of sculptural form in sound, the music's shape and displacement of space manifest in layers of guitars as plastic as sun-kissed delta mud. Here is rock music as free-standing edifice, uncontingent on cultural context or irony or any of the modern baggage that makes us think twice before we do anything at all.

NICK COLEMAN
Independent

Today, how should we approach *Finnegans Wake*? It's not incomprehensible gobbledygook, as people sometimes imagine. I think you need two copies. Faber publish a paperback at £6.99. You should be naked and read it in bed with someone you like: currently I am into the *Wake* with my son, Daniel Hilton of Class 5, for I am fearful that bourgeois attitudes may enter his growing mind. It's best to have lots of wine to hand, preferably a *frizzante* from the Trieste region, singing is appropriate and maybe someone could bring a musical instrument. A zither is good.

TIM HILTON
Independent On Sunday

Rosie Musgrave RPT, APNT

I have worked with massage for 6 years and with Polarity Therapy since 1993. I am committed to my own on-going growth process, both personally and with my work. As a practitioner, one aspect that feels fundamental to the therapeutic relationship is the quality of the container; that it offers a space that is as supportive, as non-invasive and as empowering as possible. We can then allow our attention to listen within to our process of becoming, to the subtle energy patterns that express our life experience and can honour our own innate wisdom and process of self healing.

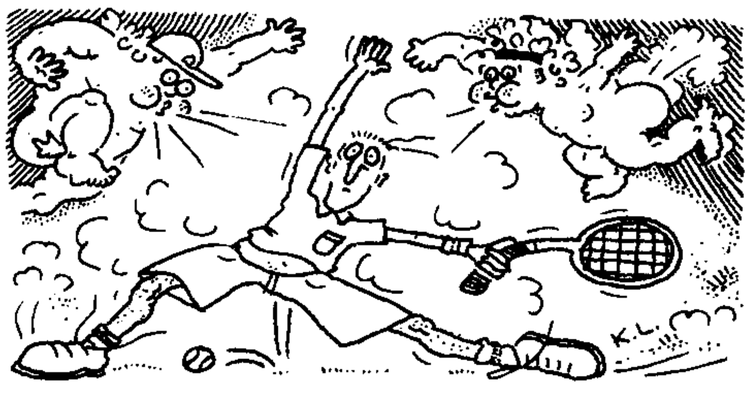
The Centre for Oriental Medicine, Totnes

I was overwhelmed by the use of a real table, for the first time in my directing career. I saw it as being less a table than an extension of the stage, another platform on which to perform, but basically it *was* a table, an old-fashioned but very real table that we brought on for some very funny scenes which people talk about to this day.

STEPHEN BERKOFF
Free Association (autobiography)

Billy Gibbons of ZZ Top: minimalist voodoo cyber-boogie for yeoman English stompers.

Independent photo caption (see above)



The wind hates tennis. The wind isn't a big fan of any outdoor ball game, but it's really had it with tennis. How it ridicules and traduces the sport we love! Wind is caused by hot air rising and being displaced by colder currents. Once there, wind rushes out all over the world, to ruin tennis matches.

MARTIN AMIS
Evening Standard

"The spirit of St Etienne resides in several select sites and states of mind...

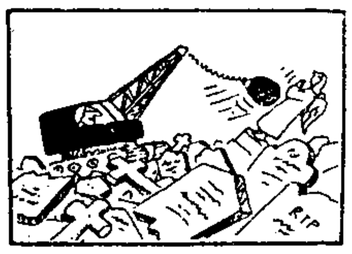
"Add to all this the fact that they are the music heard on the edge of sound, and it always was a foregone conclusion that you would surrender to this most mellifluous of *menage a trois*. Because if God is truly in the details, then St Etienne sit at his right hand holding his slide rule...

"You'd put on the Saints and sit around for hours musing on what it meant to be a girl, to be of the English blood royal, to be alive, to be duplicit, to be living after the fall of Communism, to be living at the end of the century, to be human..."

JULIE BURCHILL
Sleeve notes to St Etienne's album
Too Young To Die

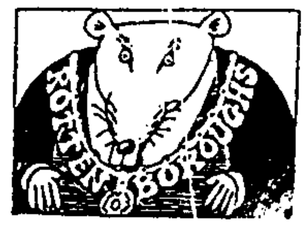
CONTRIBUTORS: J. James, O. Morris, P. Makin, R. Jennings, S. Volk, E. Strobes, T. Rudge.

£10 paid for entries



THE
Rotten Borough Advertiser

Friday, 9 August 1996



CARELESS IN THE COMMUNITY

THE scandal of the paedophile children's home worker who died of AIDS has not come as a shock to Hackney.

The story has just broken nationally but Labour leaders have known for nearly a year that Mark Trotter, who worked at Trowbridge children's home, was on a police list of paedophiles.

Although it is more than a year since Trotter died of AIDS, Hackney has only now gone public and is desperately trying to trace most of the 400-odd children who attended Trowbridge to see if they had any "contact" with Trotter. Four of the children have now died of AIDS.

But why has Hackney covered up the story for so long? As agent for Wick ward, Trotter was a Labour party and gay activist with close ties to the gay councillors who form a large rump of the ruling Labour group's inner cabal; and Hackney does not want more embarrassing revelations about its recruitment procedures, well documented in the *Eye*. On this occasion no one in social services checked a register of paedophiles: the first they knew of Trotter's background was when Inspector Knacker rang up.

But one Labour councillor who did stumble on the cover-up, Hettie Peters, found herself framed over false housing benefit claims (*Eyes passim*), and smeared by a fabricated list of complaints sent to all councillors. Since she was charged nine months ago Knacker has taken no action against her despite lobbying from some Labour "comrades".

● Meanwhile in Newham residents were disturbed by a recent recruitment drive by social services for childcare professionals. In the advertisements the department boasted of its "child centred" ethos and promised that new employees would be part of "the very best of child protection practice".

The advert was illustrated with a large picture of five tots posing in adult fashions, the little girls wearing heavy lipstick and backcombed hair, pouting provocatively under the heading "Quality childcare with attitude". Wendy Thomson, Newham's new chief executive, did not see or remove this tasteless paedophile picture, despite her previous experience in Islington, a borough with well-documented child care problems of its own.

LE CURSE DE GNOME

SINCE winning substantial libel damages from Lord Gnome early last year, things haven't gone too well for Merseyside nightclub owner Henry "H" Williams.

His attempts to turn land on New Cut House Farm, Kirkby, into a rubbish dump have been persistently knocked back by Knowsley council's planning committee. The tip was expected to make more than £10 million for Williams; his friend Roy Evans, the manager of Liverpool FC; and his lawyer Kevin Dooley — all of whom were business partners in the venture.

On 15 June, meanwhile, Williams's summer sojourn in France proved even more disappointing when he was arrested by *les flics* at the French end of the Channel tunnel on an outstanding warrant regarding heroin smuggling. "H" spent five weeks in jail before being bailed for £25,000 recognizance. He will return for trial on 22 November "determined to clear his name". He described his "hell" in a Paris prison to the *Liverpool Echo:* the handcuffing and shackling evidently not pleasing him too much. His French lawyer reportedly told the court Williams was an honourable man with a good reputation in Liverpool. Merseysiders assume nothing was lost in translation.

Back in England, those responsible for running Williams's nightclub — Ferrari's in Huyton — were none the wiser about their boss's whereabouts, openly telling the press they didn't know why the self-styled leisure services entrepreneur had gone to France. His absence was all the more vexing because the controversial renewal of the club licence was coming up.

Knowsley council's licensing sub-committee first heard the Ferrari application at a meeting on 1 July and was "mindful" not to renew it. Questions such as "Where's the owner?" were doubtlessly raised and the report of the borough solicitor on the renewal application — details of which have been withheld — — was far from positive.

However, the licensing committee *changed its mind* at its next meeting on 15 July, but placed heavy restrictions on the future running of Ferrari's. These included:

● Plenty of free drinking water to be provided at convenient locations in the club.

● A specific rest area to be set aside.

● A qualified and experienced first-aider to be employed solely to provide first aid to punters.

The committee was also happy that a Mr A. Spruce would become the new manager, no doubt to tidy the place up a bit (*geddit?*); and Ferrari's is now only allowed to hold events finishing at 6am once a month — which goes some way to pleasing sleepless locals.

BRUM-BRUM...

IT is reassuring for voters to be reminded that their city is in the hands of people who understand their problems — so the recent travails of Birmingham Labour councillor Clare Bradley will only increase the respect she has enjoyed for so long.

First there was the difficulty of housing her daughter. The poor lass could find nowhere suitable, but Mum soon persuaded a local housing association to give the girl a top-quality property at an exceedingly reasonable rate. Admittedly the task was made easier as Bradley was a senior housing officer at the association on a salary of more than £40,000 a year. But she forgot to tell her bosses the homeless waif was her own daughter, and when executives of the Family Housing Association (*sic*) found out they forced her to resign.

Bradley's second bit of bad luck came while sharing her woes over a few drinks with some councillor cronies. On the drive home she clipped the wing-mirror of a police car, which spun round and gave chase. As a responsible Labour councillor in a position of public trust, Bradley immediately, er, decided to scarper, hurtling round some of the more desirable suburbs before being stopped by a fleet of panda cars outside Edgbaston cricket ground.

Plucky to the last, she leapt from her vehicle asking: "Do you know who I am?" apparently believing city councillor status would protect her. Inside the car the police found Bradley's vicar, fellow councillor Richard Bashford (aka the Red Rev) and, mysteriously, another allegedly senior councillor whom the police subsequently refused to name. A panda was called to give the unnamed (and blameless) passenger a lift home in deference to his senior position in the legal community.

Bradley was banned from driving for three years, a biggish local event you might have thought. But the case was not listed in the normal way and was missed

IN BRIEF

WESTMINSTER: Two press officers have won £10,000 compensation for unfair dismissal. When Paul McIntyre and Neil Zetter arrived for work their press passes were confiscated, desks cleared and they were thrown on to Victoria Street. No reason was given, but the previous Friday their boss, Mark Baylis, had resigned after refusing to take part in a campaign to discredit John Magill, the district auditor running the gerrymandering investigation. When he quit, the council decided to get rid of anybody tainted by working with Baylis.

NORWICH: Councillors replacing the fire-destroyed city library with a virtual reality theme park, Technopolis, are determined to push the £79 million scheme through. The council says just 174 people in Norwich are against — but this hardly tallies with an anti-Technopolis candidate who polled 161 votes in a single ward recently. The council's £800,000 "consultation" amounted to little more than staff hounding mothers out with their children and inducing them into signing forms in return for free rides in amusement parks.

PRESTON: There's been a twist in the Operation Angel saga in which Geoff Driver was ousted as council chief executive for asking Labour too many questions about the property scam. Driver has been cleared of sexually harassing Shirley Harrison, his former deputy, by a panel of leading councillors. The decision upset the left-wing faction around deposed leader Val Wise (who led the witch-hunt against Driver) and it passed a resolution of "disgust". Harrison is herself being investigated by councillors after complaints about her conduct. Watch this space.

SOUTH TYNESIDE: The Labour council has given £10,000 worth of printing work to Washington Graphics, a firm run by ruling Labour group chairman Eddie McAtominey. Washington Graphics won the contract on merit, as it did when winning an order for work worth £1,000 a week from the local boilermakers' union branch — of which McAtominey's partner, Nancy Maxwell, is contracts officer.

O·B·N

A Pakistani journalist had even more praise [for Jemima Khan]: "She won it for Imran and she will probably win the election for him too in Pakistan, despite being English. She has embraced Islam and will make a wonderful First Lady. This has been her finest hour so far."

JOANNA BALE
The Times

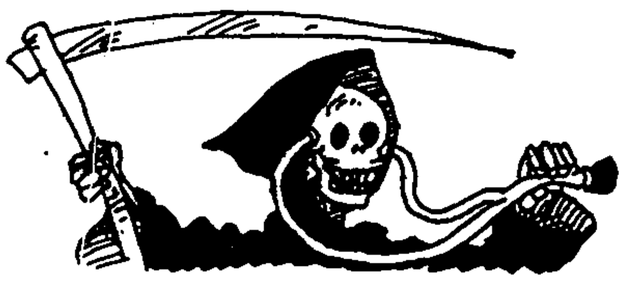
Submitted by Andrew Post

£10 paid for all entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

YOBS

HUSBAND

Ladies and gentlemen I'm Chas.
And I'm Russ.. for the rest of your journey...
..We'll be supplying grief, aggravation and general mayhem, thankyou.



DOING THE ROUNDS

THE Edgware General casualty department controversy could soon be rearing its head again.

In June constituency conscious Tory MPs Hugh Dykes and Sir John Gorst threatened to resign the whip if the department was closed. Assorted placatory noises were made by health secretary Stephen Dorrell, while hospital planners quietly got on with the job of replacing the department with a GP-led minor accident treatment service (MATS).

This sticking plaster service is slightly at odds with Mr Dykes' insistence on "24-hour emergency cover or else", although Mr Dorrell is clearly hoping that having a medical presence (ie a GP) to put the plasters on rather than a nurse will placate protesters. It will not.

As North London GP Laurence Buckman put it: "We have been lied to by the government. These MPs have behaved honourably and should do what they said they would." Over to you, John and Hugh.

● A PRIVATE company calling itself the **Fundholders Support Agency** sent the following letter to non-fundholding GP practices enticing them to commit to preparing for fundholding before the 31 July deadline for the seventh wave: "We offer a complete offsite data processing and management service capable of carrying out all of your preparatory work for 60 percent of the management allowance you will receive (from the taxpayer), leaving you with £8,000 (of taxpayers' money) to spend on the practice or draw as income for yourself".

And it gets better... "Completing the preparatory year in no way commits you to becoming a fundholder and you would not have to pay back any of the allowance received. You have nothing to lose, only an opportunity to gain £8,000." The Essex-based FSA currently carries out data administration and management for 28 GP funds and is evidently keen to expand. As company director and Hertfordshire GP Gerard Bulger admitted: "Perhaps the wording in the letter was a bit too punchy. Everything has to be done ethically and follow proper procedures."

● **WINCHESTER's Royal Hampshire County Hospital** has just enjoyed a summer show, widely agreed to have been a resounding success. Members took part from many disciplines, including doctors, nurses, physiotherapists and porters, and proceeds went to a local charity. Even the good folk of the finance department entered into the spirit: in response to a notice to all hospital employees asking for ideas for the show, they warned the organisers that any wall damage caused by removal of the advertising posters would have to be deducted from the proceeds.

● **BIRMINGHAM Women's Health Care NHS trust**, where M.D. has happy parenthood memories thanks to the expertise of the midwives, does not seem to place the same value on its staff. In proposed changes to the workforce plan, H grade midwives are to be reduced by 1.4 whole time equivalents (WTEs); G grade midwives are to be cut by 29.69 WTEs; while F and E grades are going up by 24.01 and 5.85 WTEs respectively. To achieve this exciting new blend of skill-mix, some senior midwives will be offered a choice between downgrading to a less well paid post or redundancy. Those G grades who are refashioned as F grades will also have to do 24 hour on-call stints for which they will not be paid, but will allegedly receive time in lieu. In essence, they will do the same job as at present for less money, but with the reassurance that if they run into trouble, they can call for help on a G grade who used to be an equal and has no more experience than them. Watch this space...

● THE GP training scheme in **Rotherham, South Yorkshire**, has had to be postponed because of a dearth of applicants. The first advert for the four-placed scheme attracted two home grown candidates, neither of whom showed up for interview. A second advert reeled in three applicants: one from Amsterdam who wasn't suitable; one from Spain who couldn't be contacted; and another from Spain who did pass muster but couldn't be given the job... because the scheme had been scrapped.

● GENERAL practice manpower is in crisis at both ends, with the severe nationwide shortage of new blood soon to be compounded by the imminent retirement of many senior Asian GPs. Thirty percent of GPs aged over 40 were born outside the UK, many of whom work in the toughest areas and very few graduates from British medical schools have shown an interest in replacing them. As David Polkington, a GP in **Wath-upon-Dearne**, put it: "We need to open our frontiers, particularly to the Asian community born outside this country."

● TROUBLE in **Gwent** where the health authority is refusing to make public a report criticising Julie Sharma's appointment as its policy and performance director.

"Been here long?"

Vivacious Ms Sharma landed the job (£40,000 year, plus bonus and car) only days after leaving her post as business development manager at the neighbouring **Gwent Community Health Trust**, which paid her £35,000 compensation (see *Eye* 894). Sharma was the only candidate interviewed by **Gwent health authority**.

Pressure is mounting on her to hand back the loot. Rhodri Morgan MP, Labour's health spokesman in Wales, declared: "£35,000 would pay the wages of three nurses. I'm asking the audit commission to investigate".

● THE introduction of male patients on to the **Margaret Grieve gynaecology ward** at **Chesterfield and North Derbyshire NHS trust** has not been a huge success. The move, which resulted from the closure of three wards to help claw back a £1.1 million deficit, did not go down well with female patients who complained of being leered at and having to endure dirty jokes.

As public relations manager Sarah Turner explained: "The scheme has been abandoned. We had about 20 women who complained that their privacy was being invaded. They were in for hysterectomies, late miscarriages and terminations, and were extremely concerned to discover there were men on the gynaecology ward. In retrospect, we realise that the mixed ward experiment was not a sensible idea."

M.D.

ON THE LIFEBOATS

THE thousands of dedicated lifeboatmen who risk their lives to help those in trouble at sea are getting their own sinking feeling as the Royal National Lifeboat Institution continues its programme of replacing its trusty old Arun and Waveney boats with new-fangled designs some feel could have the same ancestry as the Titanic.

The new Mersey class, for example, was built out of a fibreglass-type composite to keep it light enough to be launched from a slipway or carriage. But it was made so light that the hull tends to rupture on the least contact with a hard object, a realisation brought home the hard way to one very senior RNLI inspector when he nudged the pier while delivering a new boat to a station at Seahouses on the north-east coast. The horrified crew were left gazing at a large hole in a boat that was supposed to protect them and save others in the roughest of conditions.

Then there's the huge twin engines, together churning out 600 bhp and gobbling 30 gallons of fuel an hour. They were ordered, twinned with expensive propellers, to help the vessel achieve speeds in excess of 20 knots. The accountants on the committee decided, however, that the propellers just too expensive and demanded a tunnel-guard be put round them to avoid damage during launch and recovery. The tunnels have so reduced the propellers' efficiency that the lifeboats can barely manage 16 knots.

Such problems were as nothing, however, to what happened once the boats went into service. First came the discovery that, in boats launched from a slipway, the deck had a tendency to part company from the hull, a problem which required much expensive strengthening. Then came the realisation that the ropes and chain for the anchor had been stored beneath the foredeck, meaning that if the lifeboat's own engine failed two men would have to spend precious minutes in an exposed position on the foredeck hauling them out, minutes during which the boat could easily have run aground. The anchor itself is so large that it has to be levered over the side using a catapult system that takes more precious minutes.

Other design faults include a "survivors' cabin" which can only be reached by someone fit enough to negotiate a steep hatchway and ladder — hardly the condition in which most survivors come aboard. Meanwhile stretcher-bound casualties have to go into the aft crew quarters in a manoeuvre which risks dumping them back overboard.

The latest problem, however, posed yet more questions on structural integrity when the skegs, small keels which stabilise the vessels at sea and on which they rest on dry land, started to come loose, forcing the RNLI to send the boats back into dockyards for expensive repairs.

A similar problem has hit the newest and biggest vessels in the fleet, the Severn class, where the skegs have not just worked loose, they have fallen right off. One came off a vessel on delivery to Stornoway in the Hebrides and was found on a south coast beach by an old lady walking her dog. The incident so worried its potential crew they refused to accept delivery.

In another incident a boat was caught in seas that were heavy but supposedly well within its design capabilities off the coast of Cornwall. The boat, aptly-named The Will, suffered buckled crew seats, a damaged mast and, most worryingly, a near-rupture to a bulkhead. Some crewmen blame the RNLI's policy of designing and commissioning its own boats, both for the problems listed and for their huge cost.

"And you must be Wheezy"

"Excuse me, but would you mind filling in this short medical questionnaire first – you just can't be too careful!"

DOWN ON THE FARM

IF, as the despised ministry of agriculture continues to maintain, BSE was spread from sheep affected with scrapie, then it should come as no surprise that BSE is capable of being passed to sheep. And indeed, it is no surprise.

The "killer sheep" experiments showing this to be the case were completed two years ago. But such are the values of the British media that this only became news when Herr Fischler, EU agriculture *Kommissar*, sought recently to ban sheep offal as a result of this knowledge.

The curious thing about this affair is that, despite the passage of BSE to sheep in experimental conditions, there has been no report of BSE-like conditions occurring in sheep naturally. Claims that outbreaks of scrapie might mask its appearance can be discounted. Even if BSE arose from sheep, the Maffia thesis is that the disease underwent considerable mutation in its passage through cows to emerge as a very distinct disease.

Transmission experiments have shown, among other things, that the specific characteristics of BSE are retained even when it is passed back to sheep. Thus BSE in sheep presents very differently from scrapie. It is most unlikely that the two conditions could be confused.

But it has also now emerged into the public consciousness — even though it was reported before — that considerable numbers of sheep were exposed, in and before 1988, to concentrated feed which would have contained meat and bonemeal, precisely the same rations which are claimed to have caused the BSE epidemic. Some 280,000 tonnes of this material were fed to sheep in 1988.

With the veterinary profession adamant that there has been no BSE in sheep — and infected feed was the cause of the BSE epidemic — that does rather raise the question as to why the national flock has not been affected. Much the same question has been raised about why foreign cattle, exposed to British feed, have not also succumbed to the disease.

It may be comforting for the Maffia and others to believe that this simply represents under-reporting, but it is a fascinating reflection on the lack of intellectual rigour in the BSE debate that commentators cannot put two and two together and draw the obvious conclusion — that infected feed might *not* be the primary cause of the BSE epidemic. Not least is the now confirmed prospect of maternal transmission, which had always been a possibility, given that scrapie has long been known to pass from infected sheep to their offspring.

WHILE Herr Fischler gets steamed up about the non-existent danger of catching CJD from sheep, the Bavarian-born *Kommissar* is strangely silent on a much more serious threat closer to home. For the last few months, there has been a raging epidemic of food-poisoning in his home state, caused by a particularly nasty bug called *E coli*, coincidentally the same bug causing havoc in Japan.

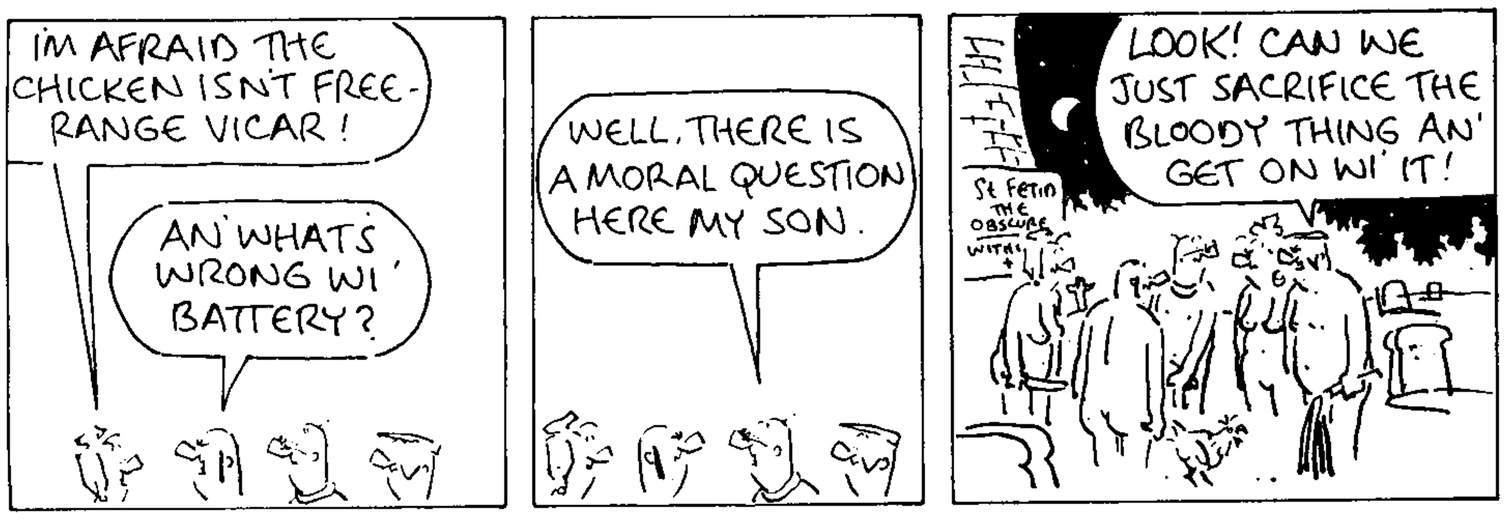
So far it is estimated that more than 1,000 people have succumbed to the disease. Seven children have died and many more are on the critical list. Since the disease is most closely associated with cattle sources, on far more substantial grounds than the claimed link between BSE and CJD, it would appear that this outbreak has killed more people in one year than the so-called "new strain" CJD. Not a few people are wondering whether the reluctance of the Germans to eat beef does not have more to do with fears over this disease. Could it be that the BSE issue is really a convenient smokescreen, especially as it is now strongly rumoured that there have been two "new strain" CJD cases in Germany?

Certainly, with casualties in the Japanese outbreak approaching 8,500 — also with seven children dead — *E coli* is presenting a far more substantial threat than the numerically insignificant "new strain" CJD. Interestingly, the largest *E coli* outbreak associated with meat in the UK was linked with beefburgers sold from the Preston branch of McDonald's. With this health conscious firm now buying beef from the continent, concerned consumers can be assured that its burgers now come from a source closer to the disease than they might otherwise have been.

'New Muckspreader'

Old Macdonald

ALBERT


I'M AFRAID THE CHICKEN ISN'T FREE-RANGE VICAR!
AN' WHATS WRONG WI' BATTERY?
WELL, THERE IS A MORAL QUESTION HERE MY SON.
LOOK! CAN WE JUST SACRIFICE THE BLOODY THING AN' GET ON WI' IT!
St Fetin the Obscure with a +

Letters

Pro-genitive

Sir,

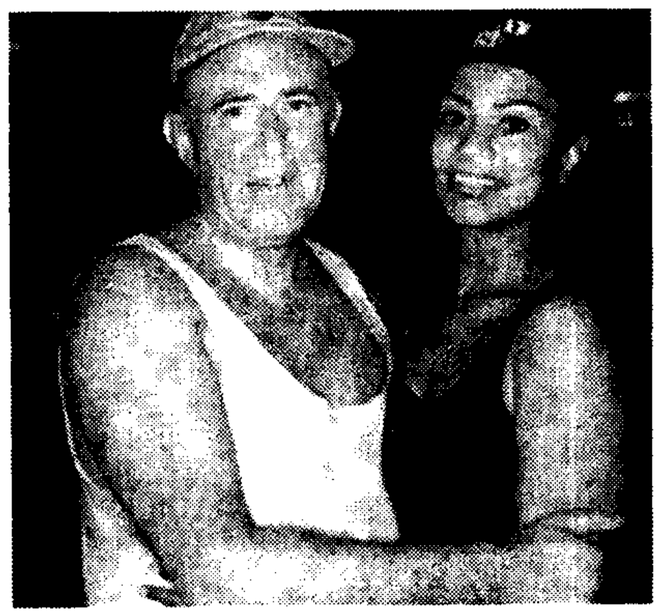
I read your publication regularly with great enjoyment but am disgusted by the insinuations in the Marquesa's column in the latest number about Princess Diana and James Hewitt.

I have no time for the princess and think she is the source of her own troubles to a large extent. If you and your contributors wish to continue to dig dirt on her, that is the price she has to pay for some of her actions and revelations. I did, however, hope that even your profession might find in their hearts a crumb of mercy and perhaps pity for the wretched children of that marriage.

Did you for one moment consider what effect your allegations could have on Prince Harry? You cannot claim he is too young to know of them. More boys at his brother's school read PRIVATE EYE *than any other paper. Those two boys are beset with problems which might leave an intelligent, well-adjusted adult floundering. For God's sake have a little thought and consideration for them.*

Yours faithfully,
MRS S.E. FOSTER,
Shifnal, Shropshire.

● ***Point taken. Ed.***



Joint venture

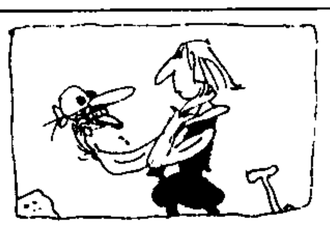
Sir,

While many of our Olympic athletes may have disappointed this year, your readers may not have noticed our little publicised success in the three-legged race, in which our team finished a credible 23rd, just behind Kazakhstan.

I would be grateful if you would publish this picture of the heroic couple, joined at the waist and ankle, on the Atlanta starting line.

I understand that the duo may be considering entering other traditional race events. I imagine they might make an impact in the egg-and-spoon, but they are surely mismatched to be in the sack together. I wonder if your readers agree?

Yours sincerely,
TREVOR PHILLIPS,
Middlesbrough.

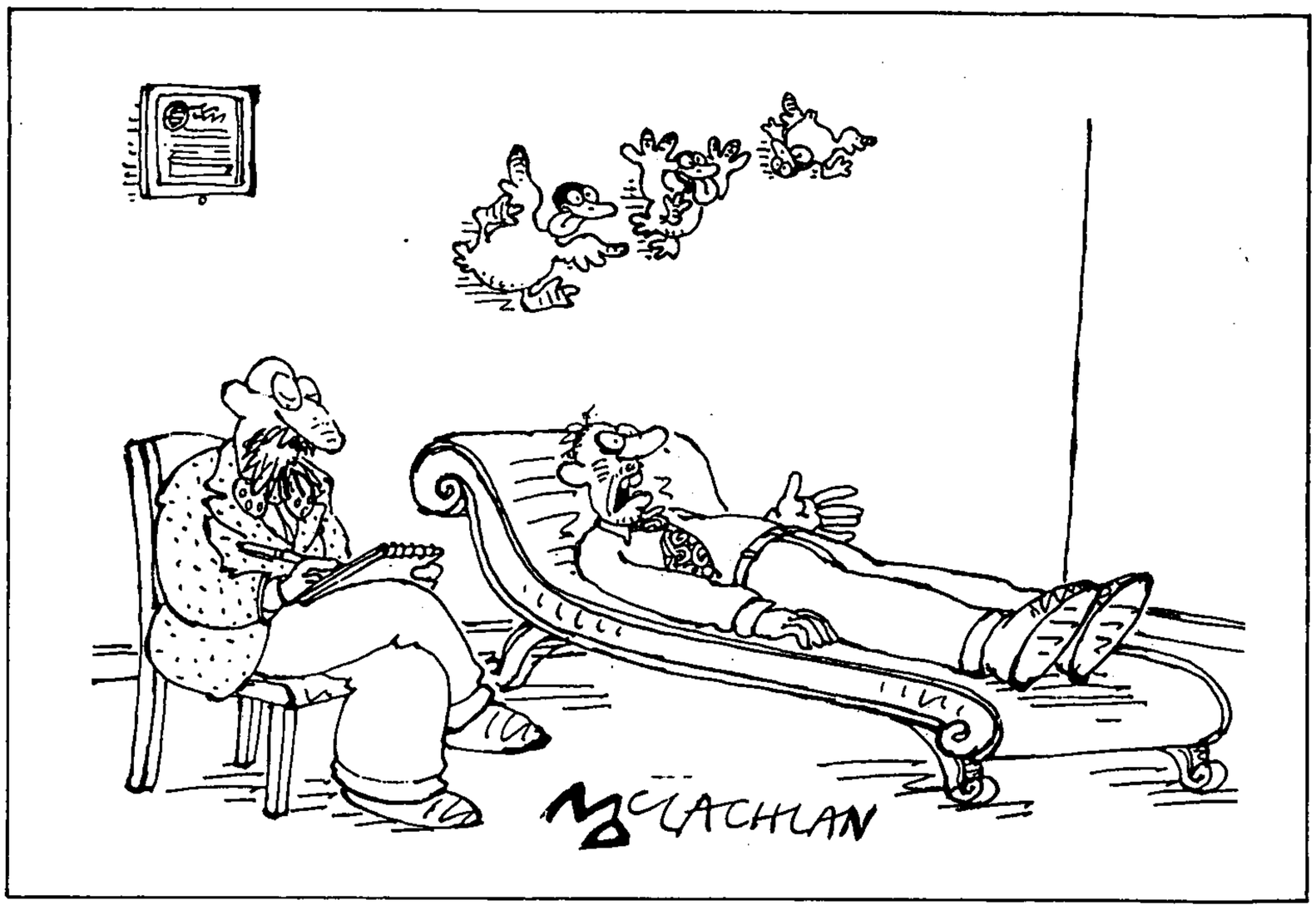


LUVVIES

"I guess I do get hurt easily," he says. "If I dance and there are 5000 people out there and one of them is looking cross-eyed — like, who does he think he is? — I'm wrecked, absolutely trashed. I'm a ship against the rocks. It ruins me. I'm just like that, I can't help it..."

MICHAEL FLATLEY
('Riverdance' and 'Lord of the Dance' star)
Sunday Times Magazine

Submitted by Francis Harvey.



Counter measures

Sir,

Re Doing the Rounds. Quote: "…dispensing doctors are denied the privileges of free trade and are not even allowed to sell over the counter drugs."

I am anaemic. My GP gave me a prescription for 30 Ferrograd which was dispensed by the practice at a normal NHS cost of £5 plus. My partner, of scientific background, looked at the tablets and went to the chemist. He returned with 30 Ferrograd. They cost him 90 pence over the counter. The practice concerned had succeeded in preventing a pharmacy opening on their patch.

I think you owe readers like me an explanation.

Sincerely,
RENUKA RAJKUMAR,
Alton, Hants.

Sir,

MD questions why doctors should not be routinely allowed to dispense their own prescriptions (903). May I suggest that one very good reason is that doctors are human and make mistakes. A pharmacist therefore provides a valuable safety net for the patient.

A recent example of the effectiveness of this safety net can be found in PULSE *magazine (29 June). A GP recounts how an alert pharmacist spotted a potentially fatal prescription. A weekly dose of methotrexate had been prescribed daily, due to ambiguous instructions from a consultant rheumatologist.*

Much of MD's column features examples of inadequate care leading to patients being harmed. By proposing that pharmacists are removed from the dispensing process, is MD attempting to drum up trade?

Yours pharmaceutically,
MARK ANDERSON M.R. Pharm.S.
Reigate, Surrey.

Sir,

Re Doing the Rounds, EYE *903: has it not occurred to M.D. that if GPs were allowed to dispense and sell over the counter medicines, then some might over-prescribe to boost their own wages? It would be akin to fat MPs awarding themselves pay rises.*

More research by M.D. would uncover the fact that chemists are definitely not given anything "generous to set up shop wherever they like" and far from being "powerful", the pharmaceutical lobby is pretty much a limp dick which seems to have been consistently steamrollered in the last 15 years of government health policy.

If you don't believe me, go see your local (if he still is local) pharmacist. Rest assured, the poor sap will be paid nothing at all for giving you good professional advice.

Cheers,
LALIT BHADRESHA, M.R. Pharm.S.
London SW4.

"Before you go Icarus I'd like you to have this"

Personal effects

Sir,

We were very sorry to read your piece "Sorry is the Hardest Word" in the Rotten Borough Advertiser last week. All of us at Westminster realise that any opportunity to denigrate the council, councillors and officers will be relished, with little or no appreciation for the vast majority of council business which is enacted extremely well and to the general satisfaction of its residents.

However, we do not believe that you are aware of the devastating effect your comments have on individuals. One of the officers you mentioned has only recently been released after a long stay in hospital and will be unable to work in the foreseeable future. These families have suffered terribly — those of you with children may have some idea of how an article in PRIVATE EYE *may affect teenagers in school or at college. Both officers risk losing their homes and have had their careers ruined over a seven year period. One councillor has committed suicide. All this devastation before the matter has even reached the courts.*

It should be remembered that none of the individuals named by the auditors is accused of making any personal gain or of any criminal activity.

In the event that they are cleared in court, these lives will have been ruined for what is, in reality, a complicated argument about legal and accounting practices in local government in a system where objections can easily be manipulated for political ends.

Those of us who have, in any way, sought to suggest that the audit process has been flawed have been accused of campaigning against the auditor. The truth is that we have very deep concerns about the process itself, concerns which have been widely reflected by local government commentators — regardless of their opinions of the respondents' guilt or otherwise.

Yours faithfully,
WESTMINSTER CONSERVATIVE GROUP.

Aerial view

Sir,

I enclose a photograph from yesterday's OBSERVER. *It clearly shows that references to John Redwood as a Vulcan are based on fact: his cranial aerial (complete with rotor blades for vertical take-off) is very prominent, as are the crystal earrings designed to pick up the slightest sign of starboard movement within the Tory party. Your readers should be warned that if they should spot this creature they must on no account approach it (nor, come to that, should they allow it to approach them).*

Yours faithfully,
G. BLOWER,
Cannock.

Named author

Sir,

Thank you for drawing your readers' attention to the forthcoming publication of my book, INHERITANCE. *I'm sorry to have to point out that you got my name wrong. It's not Ian. You must have been thinking of some other hack.*

Yours faithfully,
KEITH BAKER,
Co. Down.

Dunn raving

Sir,

World Service English Producer: *Can't get into television. Can't hack it at Broadcasting House "for reasons professional, medical or recreational".* (EYE *903) Makes programmes in English for World Service.*

Square Eyes: *Can't get into television or radio. Rejected by Fleet Street. Can't hack it on the Gerbil Fancier's Gazette for reasons professional, medical or recreational. Writes a TV column for* PRIVATE EYE.

Are these two downward-spiralling career paths by any chance related?

RICHARD DUNN,
Head of BBC English Radio, World Service.

I-SPY *Prague Airport*

Submitted by Anon. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Leaving home rule

Sir,

In contrast to your entertaining story about me in Street of Shame (26 July), the INDEPENDENT*'s front page story about 600 Protestant and Catholic families across Ulster leaving their homes was in fact rigorously sourced.*

JOJO MOYES,
The Independent.

PS: Having experimented with my shorthand to see how I supposedly confused the figure 600 with 6 o'clock, I find that the word that actually bears the most resemblance is "bollocks". Just a thought.

Indecisive proposal

Sir,

Our attention has been drawn to an item regarding Ealing's Planning East Sub-committee on page 13 of your 12 July edition.

It erroneously states that officers forgot to tell councillors they had "severe reservations" about the planning application for 19 luxury homes and also that there was no mention of a 300-name petition against it.

On the contrary, officers had severe reservations about the original plans for a number of reasons, including the loss of a number of fine trees.

These concerns were conveyed to the applicant who substantially amended his proposal before it went to committee and submitted a revised proposal which responded to officers' concerns.

The 300-signature petition was received by the council on 24 June — 20 days after the plan was considered by committee.

Yours,
JOHN BIRCH,
Environment Group Director, Ealing Council.

News quiz

Sir,

Why pick on the TODAY *programme? Surely the real target should have been the ITN* LUNCHTIME NEWS. *Two minutes into its report on the crash, even before the expert on global terrorism had his say, they wheeled out the obligatory Lockerbie victim and asked what his thoughts were.*

Even more nauseating than this was ITN's treatment of the Orange Order blockades. The day violence broke out, it was relegated off the headlines into fourth place behind all the tearjerk non-news including ITN's incessant obsession with the Dunblane inquiry, presided over by the master of schmaltz, John Suchet.

"Next today on the LUNCHTIME NEWS, *the caretaker of the Dunblane primary school tells of the day she fell and cut her knee. Oh and there's some shit going on in Northern Ireland that nobody cares about." Somebody must have got a bollocking over that as come 10 o'clock, it was at the top of the agenda where all the other channels had put it.*

And you buggers are worried about the World Service?

Yours,
DAVID SANDERS,
Co. L/Derry.

Lost leader

Sir,

Would you please explain the cover photograph of your current edition. Why should President Yeltsin be saying: "I'm the greatest Tory Prime Minister ever"?

Yours,
W.R.H. CROWTHER,
London SW6.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"The critical thing in hurdling is not to make mistakes."
DAVID COLEMAN, BBC1
(Liz Williams)

"Dickey inside her going well..."
STUART STOREY, BBC1
(Richard Owens)

"Morcelli has the four fastest 1500-metre times ever. And all those times are at 1500 metres."
DAVID COLEMAN, BBC1
(Rob MacNaughton)

"Novotna's holding her nerve — her nerve, of course, has always been her Achille's Heel."
JOHN BARRATT, BBC2
(Helen P. Hood)

Listener: *My most embarrassing moment was when my artificial leg fell off at the altar on my wedding day.*
Simon Fanshawe: *How awful! Do you still have an artificial leg?*
TALK RADIO
(Ann Walker)

HOM SAP

AUSTIN

THIS FOREIGNER WANTS TO COME INTO THE COUNTRY.
HAS HE EXPERIENCED OPPRESSION AND VIOLENCE?
NOT YET. I'VE ONLY JUST FOUND HIM.

Letter from **Jakarta**
from Our Own Correspondent

PRESIDENT Suharto, golf enthusiast and mass-murderer, won't worry too much about the embarrassing publicity his regime is attracting in the British press after the court victory of four women peace campaigners and aircraft vandals in the UK.

If proof is found that British aid to Suharto has been linked to commercial and military contracts (such as the sale of Hawk aircraft), the enormous egg being laid by the national audit office "arms for aid" report will be all over British, not Indonesian, faces.

His priority instead is domestic. He must try to avoid King Lear's fate, especially now that his revolting children —influential stakeholders in Indonesia's economy and military — are feeling the financial pinch that goes with the recent political uncertainty in the country. There are whispers about a succession in the foreign press; talk too of a long-term loss of confidence in the country and its Führer; speculation that in fact China is a more lucrative area for foreign investment these days anyway. And if this wasn't bad enough, efforts to restore security and confidence are blighted by rumours of his Ernest Saunders-like mental state after a week of blunders that have led to the worst riots in the country for 20 years.

These blunders began when Suharto decided to stem the growing popularity of the opposition party PDI, led by Megawati Sukarnoputri — daughter of President Sukarno, who was overthrown by Suharto in 1966. On his orders government agents crudely infiltrated the PDI and engineered Megawati's illegal ousting by the military in June. Now the military have sealed off the PDI headquarters, creating a perfect focal point for opposition and playing right into Megawati's hands. She is suing the army after her illegal removal from the party and will use her court appearance to humiliate further both the military and the government.

Stung by these failures as well as by threats from ministers, the police and army are doing their best to catch up with events in the traditional brutal fashion. A communist conspiracy has been detected in the opposition: there have been 236 arrests, including that of labour leader Muchtar Pakpahan, whose crime is to have been compared to Burma's Aung San Suu Kyi and who now faces the capital charge of subversion.

One hundred and fifty eight people are still unaccounted for. The authorities have been much assisted in their work by the acquisition of the British-made Generics intelligence computer, backed by sophisticated British management training support, as well as by the welcome provision of British made Scorpion tanks and British made Tactica armoured cars.

More blunders occurred when foreign journalists were summoned last Thursday to a government press conference by military chief Lt Gen Syarwan Hamid, with a brief to "reassure" anyone worried about the rebels. "The faster they are arrested, the better," he said, adding that a "shoot on sight" policy for those "disturbing the peace" would ensure that "foreign investors don't hesitate to come to our country". Annoying liberals were calmed by the news that "only trained sharpshooters" would be used "under strict supervision" and that a "shoot on the spot" policy like this was a last resort. All this made great copy in more civilised capitals.

Some reports of cancelled dealing followed, although many investors sensed a quick killing of a different kind. A spokesman for Goldman Sachs told Reuters that now was a "good opportunity to pick good quality stocks". On the same day that Megawati's court case was to be heard in a packed courtroom surrounded by crowds of supporters and the world's press, Siemens announced a DM500 million telecommunications deal. Happily the case was postponed after one of the judges was afflicted by a sudden case of toothache. A flurry of bargain-hunting by dealers followed the production of the dentist's note.

Even the announcement that "order had been restored" was bungled. While officials were announcing to nervous foreign visitors that there was "no significant increase in the country's risk-rating", 200 special forces were being rushed to cordon off Suharto's palace, the sound of military aircraft echoing in the skies overhead.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

O "This whole case should have been laughed out of court months ago," defending counsel Gerard McCoy told Justice Brian Keith during an appeal in Hong Kong's High Court. "This is about sweet meats, not pornography. Trouble is, Chinese people have always been lacking in a sense of humour about sex."

The case concerned an edition of East Touch magazine, which caused moral outrage last year by running a five-page satire entitled A Festival of Pornography, with photographs of an upright banana, chocolate "naughty bits," an "alluring

slice of nectarine," and melon breasts with raspberry nipples. In one heated exchange, Justice Keith examined a photograph of the banana (complete with chocolate button cartoon face) and declared that "the penis surrounded by rather unappetising bits of fruit salad is plainly erect."

"It's just a banana, M'Lord" countered McCoy.

"It's shaped like a penis," the judge observed.

"But all bananas are sort of shaped like penises," the lawyer said.

The judge responded that "certain things showed it to be an erect penis, and therefore indecent".

"Is your lordship looking at the happy smile on its face and the chocolate button eyes?" asked McCoy.

The magazine, which had earlier been found guilty of publishing obscene photographs, had its appeal rejected. The publisher now faces the prospect of a fine of $200,000 and a year in jail. *(South China Morning Post, 3/7/96. Spotter — Alice Tai)*

— O —

O "Do not grieve for the loss of a favourite pet. Death can be the beginning, not the end. Call the Eternal Ascent Society of Florida, and transform your faithful companion into a World Spirit.

"After cremation, the Eternal Ascent Society will put the ashes of your beloved pet into a helium-filled balloon, and release them into the sky. As they rise through the troposphere, the temperature decreases until, at a height of eight kilometres, the skin of the balloon reaches minus 40. At this point, the balloon will crystallize and shatter, scattering the ashes to the four winds. Also released are leaflets promoting the Eternal Ascent Society. Some have been found as far away as Santa Barbara. Stop press: on March 31 we launched the ashes of our first human — Myrna Lou Clemons, whose dying wish to become a World Spirit was fulfilled when her remains were released into the heavens.

"For further information and a price list, contact the Eternal Ascent Society, Crystal River, Florida." *(The Leader-Post Regina 28/6/96. Spotter — Brendan Joseph O'Byrne)*

— O —

O *"As soon as a girl chews this evil gum, she goes into a sexual frenzy and loses all control," Fathi Mansur, a deputy from Dakahlia in the Nile Delta region, told the Egyptian Parliament. "That is why the Israelis are smuggling it into our country, and why all trade must be banned at once."*

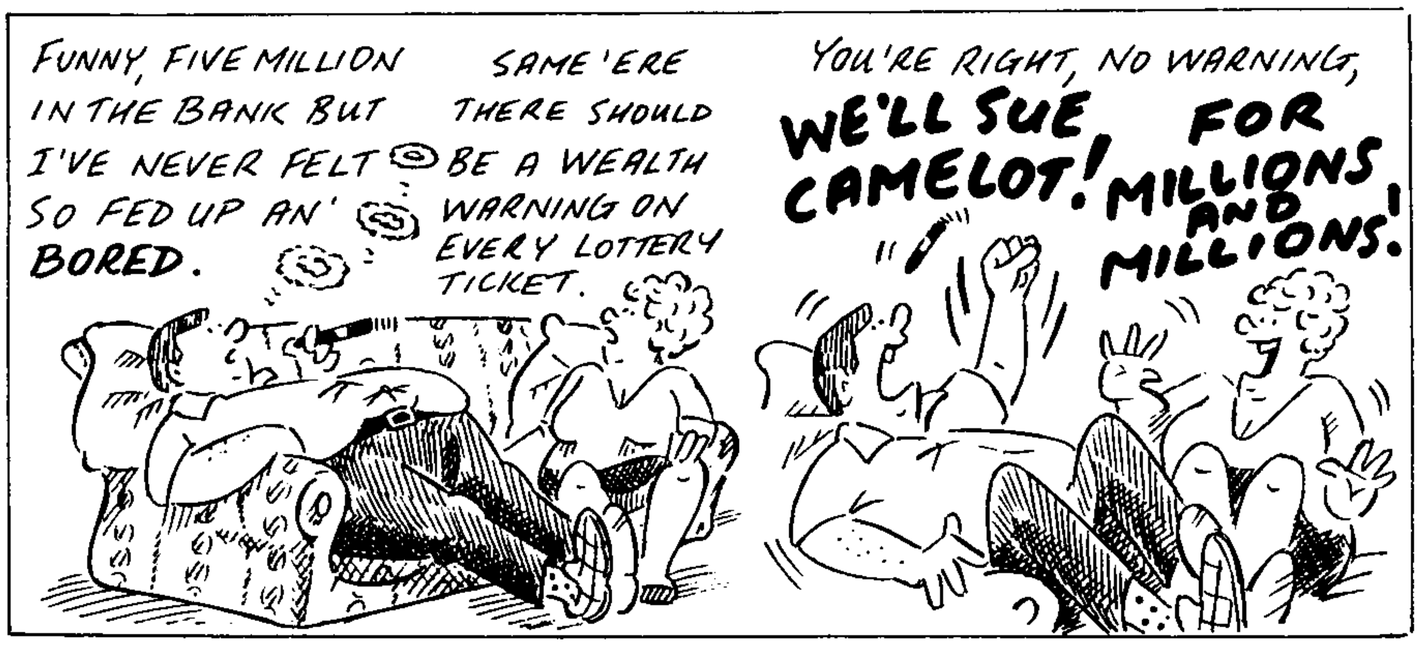
Mansur urged the parliament's health committee to work out an action plan without delay. "This gum, which is called the Wrigley, is flavoured with the notorious aphrodisiac spearmint and is well-known in Israel for its erotic effects. In Egypt, it has already been to blame for at least fifteen lewd sexual attacks, all of them committed by girls who had been chewing it. We suspect that Zionists are smuggling this substance into our country, and we must dismantle their illegal network at once, because this gum is destroying the morality of our Egyptian youth. It is nasty. It can get stuck under shoe, and some people hide it under desks." (Al-Akhbar [Cairo] 20/6/96. Spotter — Peggy Henderson)

Compiled by

Victor Lewis-Smith

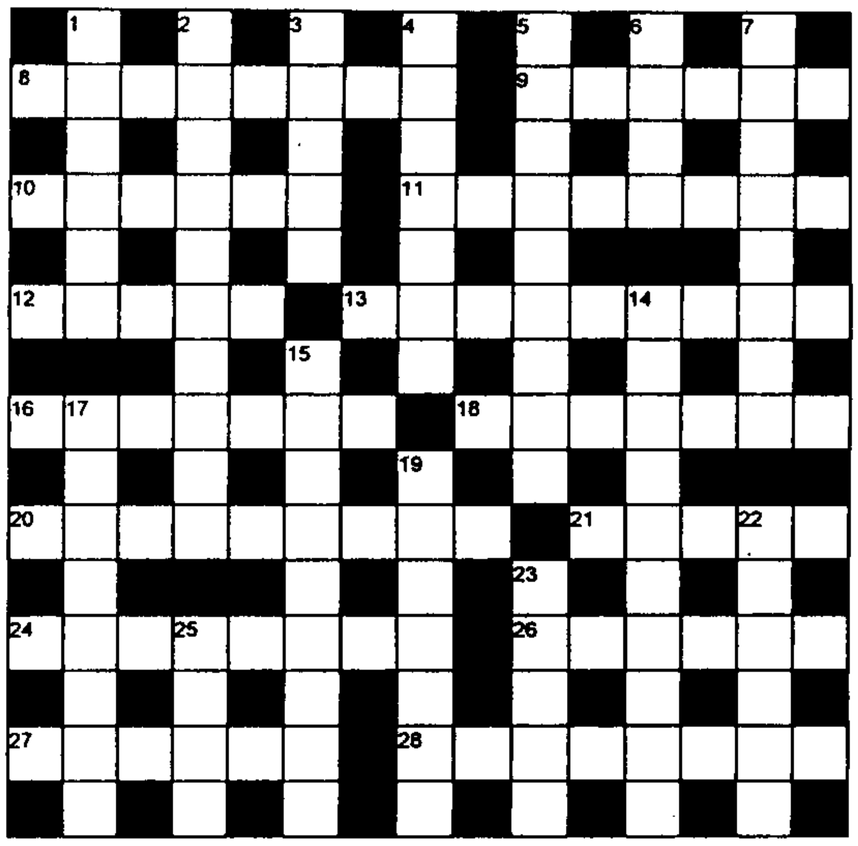
The Lottery Winners

TURNER


FUNNY, FIVE MILLION IN THE BANK BUT I'VE NEVER FELT SO FED UP AN' BORED.
SAME 'ERE THERE SHOULD BE A WEALTH WARNING ON EVERY LOTTERY TICKET.
YOU'RE RIGHT, NO WARNING, WE'LL SUE CAMELOT! FOR MILLIONS AND MILLIONS!

EYE CROSSWORD 59

by Cyclops *£100 prize*



ACROSS

8/13/20 Inside Rolls, round female takes Dick's thing — thus are politicians' rewards revealed (8,2,7,9)
9 Luvvie memoirist's a 'prick' in Old English (6)
10 When one gets rotten maths it's a far from jolly wheeze (6)
11 It might mark a military departure — Mailer's final chance? (4,4)
12 Abusing one's public position is bloody hard work! (5)
13 (see 8)
16 Here's a gem about Eggar — most satisfactory! (7)
18 Brian's ex left Kenneth's ex a hard choice (7)
20 (see 8)
21 It's going back to Scotland you see direction on hated motorway feature (5)
24 Where justice is administered — Heseltine's first to be engulfed by attack of the sweats (3,5)
26 Interest taken by politician in broadcaster is very revealing (6)
27 Piss artist about to consume a vast quantity gets plug (6)
28 Service accommodation salesman in stupor till October (8)

DOWN

1 Coren's crazy to be an editor (6)
2 What ambitious politicians aspire to — getting pissed with rotten Frost (4,6)
3 House material, but unable to take the blows, this MP? (5)
4 Terrible peril of being an embryonic champion (3-4)
5 A revolting type of careless bloke's HIV (9)
6 Major, getting sod all right, upset boisterous party (4)
7 Rotten borough city once held back by clapped-out familiar Page 3 girl (3,5)
14 Complaint and catastrophe to which Major responded in a bull-headed way? (4,6)
15 Piss delicately on wicket causing a political scandal (9)
17 Scraps magazine associated with better times (5-3)
19 Crack about unlikely MEP's one-time non-drinking (7)
22 Awful military blazer (6)
23 'Up yours!': no street greeting, but oddly appropriate (5)
25 Pig, it's said, who's responsible for knocking off cows (4)

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 16.08.96. Entries to "Crossword", Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

Solution to Crossword No. 58

Winner: M. McMURRAN

ACROSS: 6 Tumble 8 Victoria 10/21 Multi-party talks 11 Pigs 12 Machismo 14 Aldrin 15 Mug shot 17 Asquith 19 Stages 20 Politics 22 Trio 23 Chancellor 25 Bugger me 26 Ensign.

DOWN: 1 Tutu 2 Sex Pistols 3 Everton 4 Pompidou 5 Jingoistic 7 Butch 9 Cry 13 Adulterous 14 Arse-licker 16 St George 18 Opiates 21 (see 10) 23 Cork 24 Olga.

BRITAIN'S ATLANTA DISASTER

by Our Man in Georgia **Lunchtime O'Lympics**

USA: Winners

UK: Useless

FROM day one to the closing ceremony it was the same dismal story — in every event Britain failed and America triumphed.

Nowhere was this more evident than in the final of the Synchronised Rhythmic Legover.

It all looked to be going well for Britain but then at the last minute disaster struck as the fault judge, Hiram J. Gottlieb III, raised his red flag and disqualified the Brits.

And for why? The pictures tell the story. The American couple, Randy Jo Reebok and Moses Ellington Junior are obviously different sexes as the event demands.

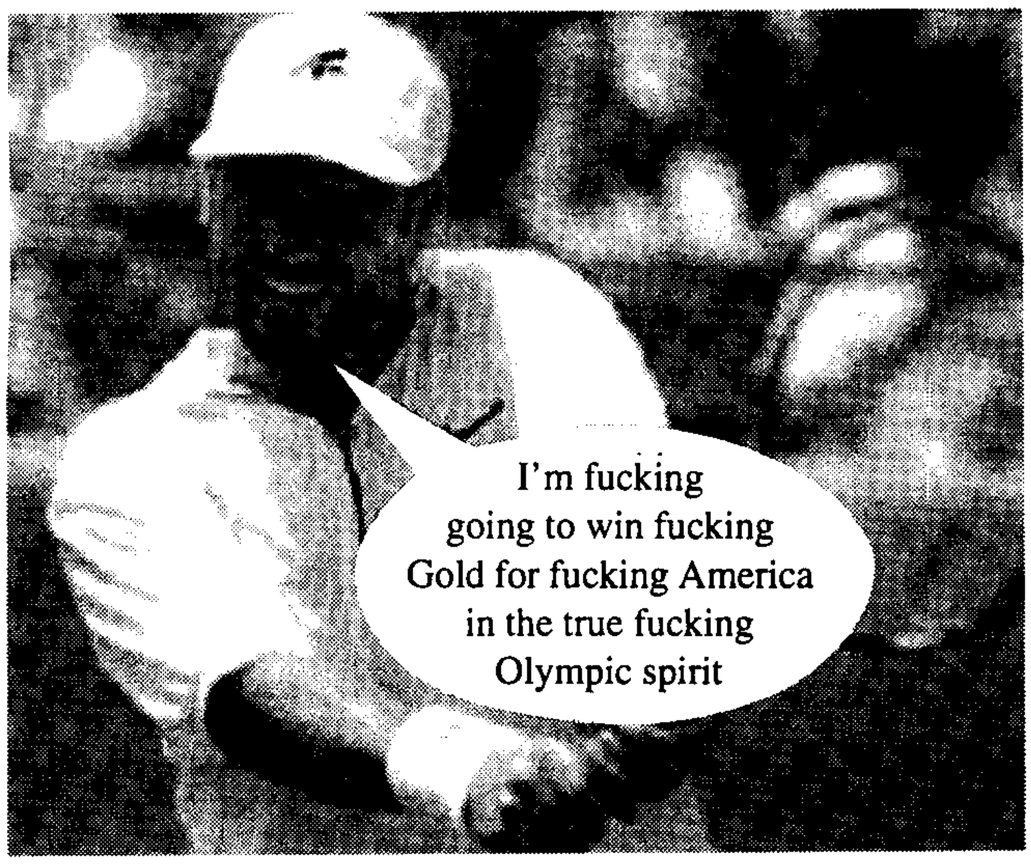
But the Brits, Justin Kneetremble and Morris Milkwood have made an elementary error by being the same sex.

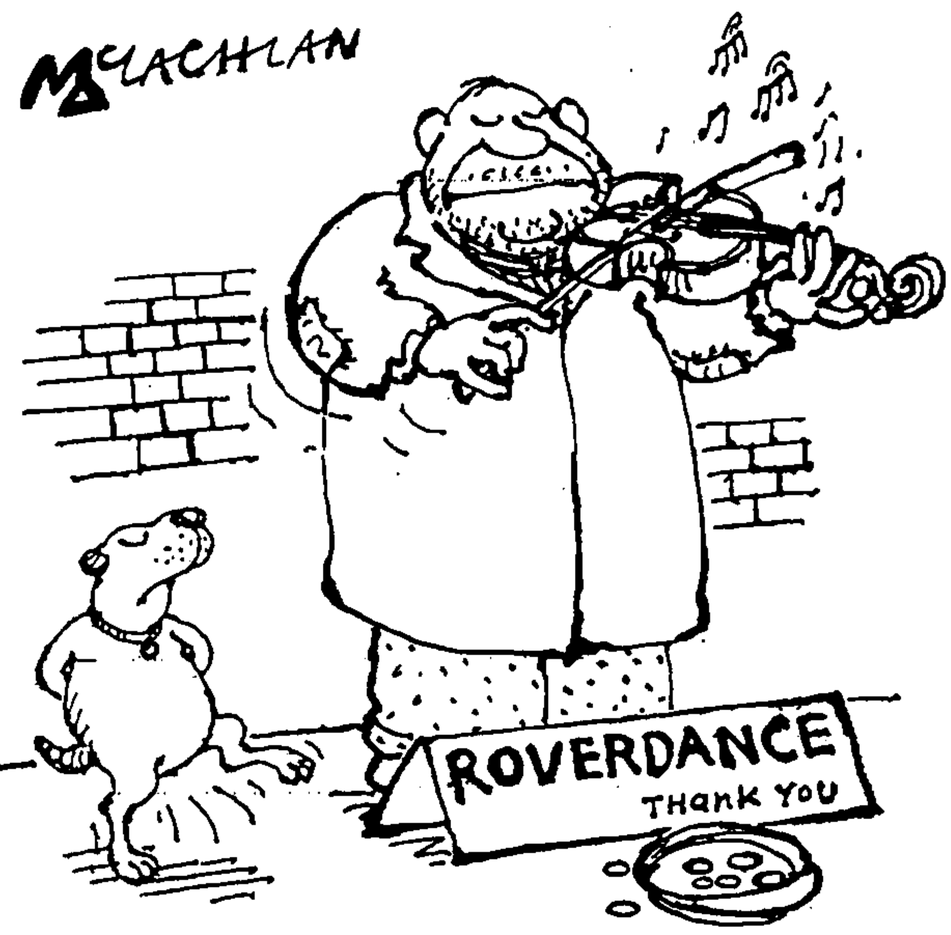
Coxed Pairs

Said British Legover coach Dave Deadbeat: "I blame John Major. We have repeatedly asked for funding for this event but have been refused. If Justin and Morris had trained in America they would surely have got it right and pulled off Legover Gold for Britain".

"Roger" Bannister is 56.

QUENTIN AGASSINO





TEN TELL-TALE SIGNS THAT THE FEELGOOD FACTOR IS BACK

1. Sales of new P-Registration cars are at their highest ever. Never before have so many P-Reg cars been sold.

2. Champagne sales have increased by 3000% in a wide range of areas across the nation. Places as diverse as Ascot, Henley, Goodwood and Sir David Frost's summer party all record staggering people *(shurely 'figures'? Ed.).*

3. British lingerie manufacturers are saying that they sold more leopardskin suspender belts in August than at any time since next year. *(Put in picture which is the only reason for this feature. Ed.)*

4. The British paper-clip industry, always a traditional barometer of the nation's industrial health, has told the CBI that it is "inundated with orders" for September. The average Briton is now purchasing a staggering 3.5 paperclips per week MORE than at any period since the hot summer of 1947.

5. British lingerie has (*You've done this but put in more pictures anyway. Ed.)*

6. Articles about the Feelgood Factor have increased 150% since last week. Say editors "It's a godsend. At last we can feel good about filling some space".

7. P-Reg cars, champagne and lingerie are all contributing to...

8. Er...

9. Er...

10. That's it.

This article was based on research provided by the Conservative Central Office, Feelgood House, Factor 23, Essex.

© Atlanta 1996

The Secret Olympic Diary of John Major aged 47¾

Monday

This week begins my secret weapon in the battle to win the next election, ie Britain's performance in the Olympics. I have been to Ryman's in my lunch hour and have bought three special notebooks to record all our medals — a gold one, a silver one and a bronze one. Well, actually they are all grey, but I have written the words "Gold", "Silver" and "Bronze" on them. By the end of this week I confidently predict that the books will be full, the feelgood factor will be back and I will be heading for a "Gold" at the election, with only a silver for Mr Blair and the bronze for Mr Ashdown. Mr Redwood will not even get into the final and Sir James Goldsmith will be disqualified for cheating.

Tuesday

There has been a temporary hiccup in my election-winning plan, codenamed "Going For Gold". Mr Linford Christie has fallen down even before the race started, and I had already written him in my book as the winner of the 100 metres. This is not inconsiderably annoying. However, I am sure that Miss Sally Gunnell will make up for it tomorrow in the hurdling events.

Wednesday

Miss Gunnell has let me down. She has fallen over and sprained her ankle, forcing me to remove her name as well from my "Gold" book. However, it is early days and we still have many winners waiting to claim their medals, eg Colin Jackson in the hurdles and Linford Christie again in the 200 metres, which he will almost certainly win if he doesn't fall down.

Thursday

It has not been a very good day for my great election campaign, or rather night, since all the events seem to take place after my usual bedtime. Mr Christie and Mr Jackson have not done as well as I expected, although Mr Jackson did come fourth, which was very good considering that he was up against some of the best athletes in the world.

Friday

At last a historic day, and I have been able to make full use of my books. Someone called Mr Smith won the bronze in the High Jump, which is the first time an Englishman has won in this event for 60 years. "So you're for the High Jump," said my wife Norman appreciatively, which shows that she is at last beginning to understand politics. Also we got a bronze in the 8000 metres Mountain Bike Pursuit event, which has already put us 69th in the medals table, way ahead of countries such as:

Benin
Pitcairn Island
Rwanda
Vatican City
Antarctica.

Saturday

Gold, gold, gold! Or rather, at least, *one* gold by the two greatest oarsmen in the world, Michael Redgrave and Harold Pinter, or something like that, who are both British. This will show Mr Blair who is boss! I woke Norman to tell her the great news at 2.14am. "What are Coxless Pairs?" she asked. "Two men going down the river very fast, without anyone telling them where to go," I explained. "Just like you and Dr Mawhinney," she said, going back to sleep.

Sunday

There is no stopping us now. We are on course for medals in all the following events:

Underwater Kayak Pairs
Mixed Table Tennis
Men's Hairstyling
Crazy Golf
Beach Scrabble
Marathon Kite-Flying
Synchronised Pot-Holing
Women's 4x4 minute microwaving

The final tally could well be not inconsiderably world-beating, and we might even pull ahead of:

Costa Rica
Bosnia
Outer Mongolia
Muroroa

Sunday

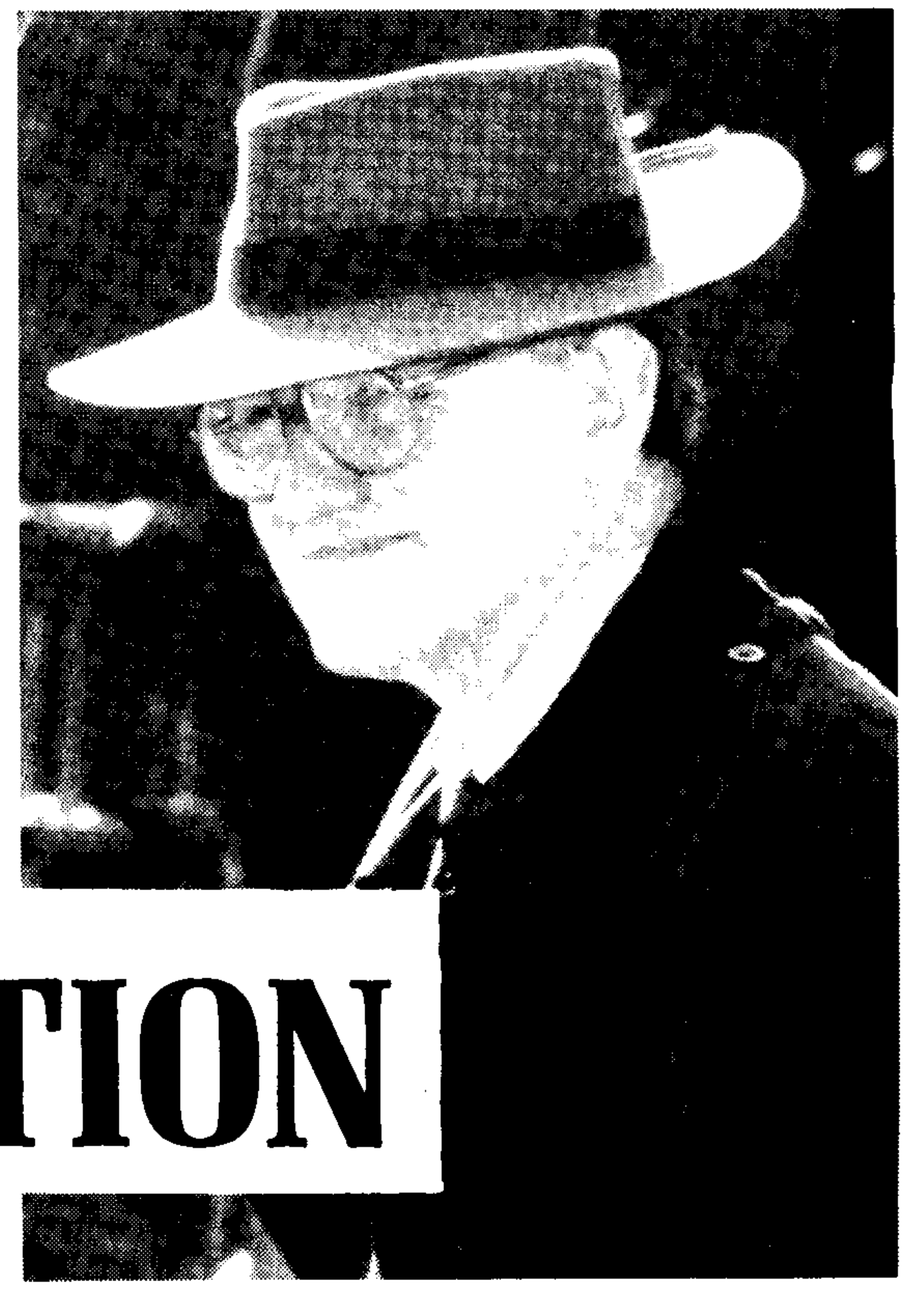
Today the Olympic Games finished with a final result which I have to admit was in my judgement in no small measure not quite as good as I had expected. I have decided to retitle all my books as Gold Bastards, Silver Bastards and Bronze Bastards, with the names of all the people who let me down so badly written in them instead. The situation is so serious that I called in Mr Ian Sport, the Minister of Sproat, and asked him why he hadn't resigned. "Don't you realise," I told him "that I was well on course to win the next election, and now you have thrown it away?" Not that we are going to lose, oh no. But now I will have to think up a new secret weapon.

"Why don't you go on holiday, prime minister?" said Mr Sport. "That usually makes you more popular."

This is a good idea, so I have told Norman that we are going off to a country called Algarvia, which did not win any medals at all in the Olympic Games.

Daily Mail
FRIDAY, AUGUST 9, 1996
NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR 35p

"FISH PROBABLY SAFE" HOGG REASSURES NATION



by Our Food Scare Team LUNCHTIME O'BSE

NEW research by the Daily Mail has revealed that the killer disease BSE could pass to fish, even though there is as yet no evidence to confirm this.

But last night Food Scare Minister Douglas Hoggwash was quick to deny that Britain's 300 billion fish were at risk from Mad Cow Disease.

Said Hoggwash: "At present there is no evidence whatsoever to suggest that thousands of Britons will die from eating contaminated fish.

"But this cannot be ruled out as a possibility and government scientists have therefore advised that, as a precautionary measure, all fish over the age of 3 months are to be slaughtered and incinerated in underwater power stations."

Our Sole

But top microbiologist Dr Richard Strabismus of Leeds University (formerly Utrecht Polytechnic) claims that the government is not going anything like far enough.

"I have been injecting kippers with BSE prions for over five minutes, and although none of them have yet shown symptoms of BSE, they have all died.

"From this it is clear that, by the year 2015, up to a million people will be dying in Britain every week from Mad Fish Disease."

Summer Quiz

The Times Court Artist has drawn the following picture. Can you answer the following questions:

a) Why is Fergie sitting next to Mick Jagger in Court?

b) Why is Jimmy Greaves holding an apple?

c) Is this the best they can do?

Send your children's drawings to Summer Art Competition, The Times, Wapping.

SOCCER

WORLD RECORD TRANSFER FEE FOR NEASDEN STRIKER

by **E.I. Erewego**, Our Man On The Terraces With A Packet Of Vodka-Flavoured Crisps And A Copy Of Anthony Holden's Life Of Tchaikovsky From Neasden Library

THE WORLD of soccer was rocked to its foundations yesterday by the news that Neasden's top goal-scorer Baldy Pevsner was returning to his native Tyneside for the world's smallest-ever transfer fee, 15p.

Said an ashen-faced Ron Knee, 59, Neasden's legendary supremo: "It is a tragedy both for Neasden and the game. Baldy has scored over 1000 own goals for the club that has been his home for 70 years."

Shearer Madness

Pevsner, 93, however, was unrepentant. "I am going back," he told waiting newsman Dipak Silvester of the Neasden Weekly Echo, "to the club where I started, Wallsend Epidemicals. It was an offer I could not resist, to take on Andy Jaspan's position outside the ground selling The Big Issue."

But Neasden fans (Sid and Doris Bunker) were reluctant to say goodbye to the man they called "The Traitor". "We will set fire to his car," said an angry Sid, "and then he will have to stay at Neasdenbridge for ever."

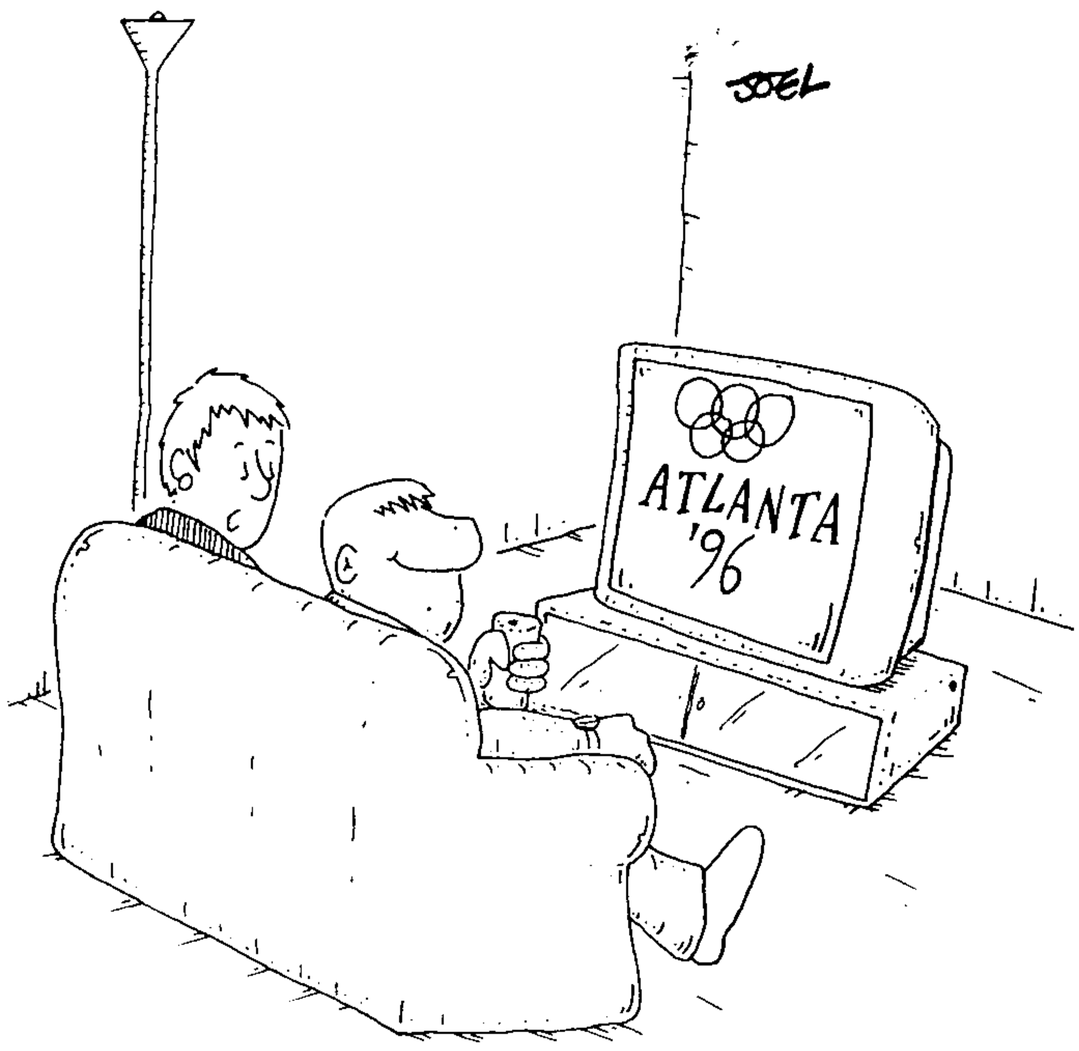
LATE SCORE

Pre-Season Friendly

Neasden 0

Clapham Gay Pride Wanderers 14
(Lyttle J. 8, Tatchell P. 5, Pevsner [o.g.] 1)

Man of Match — Clapham's top scorer John Lyttle



"Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn"

"He's the same every year — he peels terribly"

EXCLUSIVE TO PRIVATE EYE

JIMMY KNAPP, General Secretary of G.M.T. (formerly A.S.L.E.E.P.) explains the issues involved in the forthcoming series of tube and rail strikes.

Urrr oberammergau hungerfordbridge waquaryounis rostropovich tararaboomdeay taramasalata MY MEMBERS haroun al raschid glenfiddich gondolieri NEW WORKING PRACTICES armageddon partick thistle articulated lorry RAILTRACK BOARD dungarees auchtermuchty kedgeree NO WISH TO INCONVENIENCE THE PUBLIC ataturk braw bricht nicht harrisonbirtwistle MANAGEMENT INTRANSIGENCE rumpelstiltskin rumpy pumpy GOOD SENSE WILL PREVAIL.

JOHN COLE returns next week to discuss the latest moves in the Northern Irish Peace Process.

Vern I need a heading here

'ROEDD nos Iau, 11 Gorffennaf yn noson arbennig iawn i'r Sesiwn Sesiwn eleni yn Uned pedwar Neuadd Idris yn Nolgellau ac yno gyfle i'r trefn- prynu Cr

Cambrian News

This room has been set aside for our guests who specifically request a room where smoking does not take place. We appreciate your cooperation by smoking and by asking your guests to do the same. Thank you very much.

Holiday Inn, Munich

IN THE COURTS

Pakistan victory as England collapse

Test Result: Pakistan win by an innings and £500,000

Day 94. Umpire: Mr Justice Cocklecricket

Sir George Carperson Q.C. *(representing His Holiness The Imran of Khan)*: In view of the fact that my client fears that I might lose his case, Mr Khan would like to offer an unreserved apology for any suggestions of ball-tampering, racism and vulgarity which might have been inferred from his article in the Islamabad Gazette and Evening Advertiser of 12 March 1987, which your lordship will find in Bundle B under the heading "Beefy and Lamby's Silly Moustaches Make Them Look Like Dodgy Essex Car Salesmen, Doncha Know". My client wishes to withdraw these allegations which he never made.

Mr Justice Cocklecricket: So that's the end of the case is it, Mr Carperson? It is time to draw stumps?

Sir Charles Greyman Q.C. *(for Mr 'Mad' Beefy Botham and Mr Allan 'Mad' Lamb)*: My Lord, I appeal. There is a great deal of money at stake here, and were the case to come to an end now, my learned friends and I would be placed in a most invidious position. We are chasing a target of £1 million in fees, at an over rate of £4.3 thousand pounds an hour. Besides we have a duty to our spectators to keep the game going for as long as possible.

Judge: Do I take it, Sir Charles, that you are not accepting this declaration by the other side? Then play must continue.

(Various Test cricketers were then summoned from various grounds all over England, including Mr M. Atherton, Mr J. Emburey and the late W.G. Grace)

Geoffrey Borecott *(for it is he)*: I would like t'Court t'know that I am t'most important booger in t'whole history of t'game of cricket and I have just come here in a taxi at my own t'expense (£6.14p) when I was right in t'middle of addressing t'nation while commentating on t'latest t'est match at Lords.

Judge: Mr Borecott, could you kindly answer the question?

Borecott: T'question is — is t'Brian Close a fookin' bastard or is he nowt? And t'answer is — yes, he fookin' is.

Mr Justice Cockerspaniel: That will do Mr Borecott. You may leave this court.

Borecott: And t'another thing. That t'Close is a reet bloody t'bastard.

Judge: Ushers, take this man off the pitch.

(The Greatest Living Yorkshireman was then escorted from the court to address waiting newsmen in the same vein for several hours. Mr Justice Cricklecarrot then summed up)

Judge: Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, you may now retire and toss a coin to decide which of these worthless parties deserves to win. A draw is not acceptable. In awarding damages you are to consider what a reasonable man could estimate was adequate compensation for being described as a racist and a cheat. You are to imagine, for example, the cost of a second-hand Rolls Royce or a holiday for two on the delightful island of Anguilla, where I am shortly to spend a fortnight with Lady Cocklecarrot. Or, it may be, the price of an annual subscription to the Garrick Club. Or, it may be, the price of a portion of cod and chips, whatsoever that may be and howsoever you may calculate it. Ladies and gentlemen, these things are a matter for you to decide. You may now retire, as I should have done ten years ago.

(The jury then retired for five minutes to talk about Jemima's dress and whether she will call her child Fifi Trixibelle Goldfinger Khan or something more Moslem)

Cocklecarrot: Have you reached a verdict?

Foreperson of Jury: We have indeed, your worship. We are unanimously agreed that Mr Khan is a nice, well-spoken gentleman, who apologised like a true Englishman. As for the two with moustaches, well you've only got to look at them. They look like the builders who ruined our central heating last winter.

Mr Khan: Praise be to Allah.

The case was concluded

SCORE IN FULL

England

I. Botham *bowled* Carman	£150,000
A. Lamb *stumped* Carman	£150,000
Extras	£200,000
Total *(all out)*	**£500,000**

Pakistan

I. KHAN *not out*	£100,000
Total	**£100,000**

Winners: Mr G. Carman and Mr C. Grey plus solicitors, junior barristers and the legal profession in general

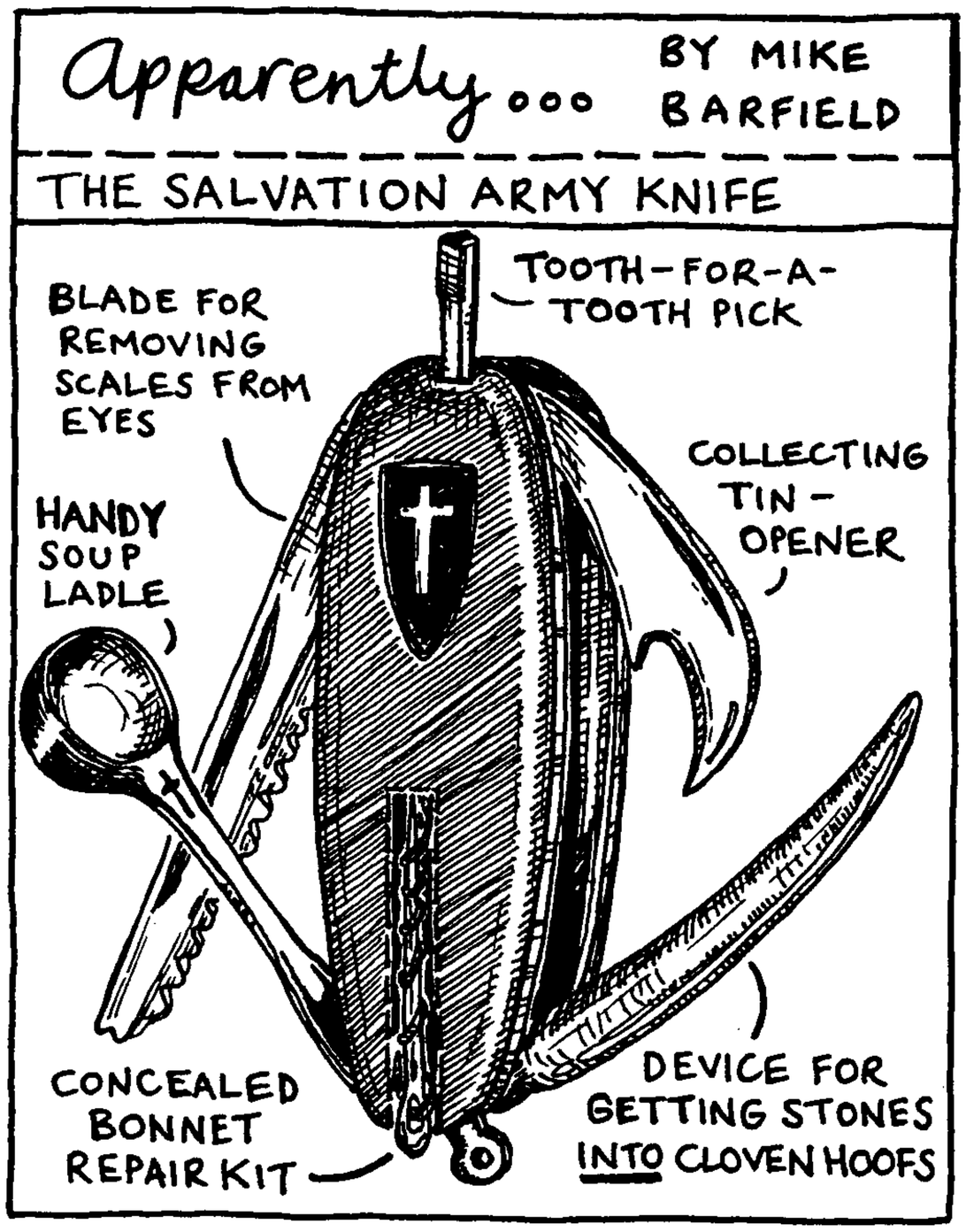
"Well, Joan and Keith — you must admit our new guard dog is thorough"

Why Can't Our Cricketers Beat Foreigners At Libel?

asks the late E.W. Swanton

Once again, it is the same old depressing story. England start well, with Botham almost in his old form, ably assisted by Lamb. But then concentration seems to go, the footwork becomes slack, and they throw away all their wickets for £500,000.

The question remains: do the Pakistanis cheat at libel? Perhaps we shall never know.


Apparently... BY MIKE BARFIELD
THE SALVATION ARMY KNIFE
BLADE FOR REMOVING SCALES FROM EYES
TOOTH-FOR-A-TOOTH PICK
HANDY SOUP LADLE
COLLECTING TIN-OPENER
CONCEALED BONNET REPAIR KIT
DEVICE FOR GETTING STONES INTO CLOVEN HOOFS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

From Mr Andrew Jaspan

(Big Issue Salesperson No.3514 [Tottenham Court Rd. Tube Station])

Sir, In his reply to my reply to Alan Rusbridger's article replying to my piece "The Totally Outrageous Way In Which I Was Sacked As Editor Of The Observer", Hugo Young yet again repeats the totally unjustifiable statement that, at a meeting of the Scott Trust on March 18, the trustees, including Anthony Sampson, whose part in this sorry affair has not had the publicity that it deserves, claimed that I had been "the most incompetent editor of the Observer" that they had ever unanimously appointed only two months earlier. In my forthcoming book on the affair, I shall reveal for the first time *(cont'd p.94)*

QUITE FEMALE

mature student, requires self contained studio/bedsit, up to 10 miles south, south-east or south-west of Leicester University, non smoker.

Leicester Mercury, 25.10.95

QUIET FEMALE

mature student, requires self contained studio/bedsit, up to 10 miles south, south-east or south-west of Leicester University, non smoker.

Leicester Mercury, 26.10.95

From The Referendum Bunker

Bulletin No. 94

Achtung!

Nine months to go and counting, Mr Bond.

And things are not looking so cosy for you, nicht wahr? All your little schemes are in ruins, whereas I, Sir Jammy Goldenwonder, go from strength to strength.

When I called a mass rally of my followers in Newcastle the other day, over 27 people packed into the hall.

In a survey in my constituency of Putney, a poll showed that no fewer than 1 voter in every 1000 was thinking of voting for me.

I tell you, Mr Major, you are a desperate man. I see you are reduced to selling your services at dinner to rich businessmen at £1000 a time. It is sad to see a prime minister of the once great country of Britain having to degrade himself like a common prostitute.

You do not deserve to win, Mr Major. You deserve only to die.

(Sir Jams presses secret button under desk to reveal pit full of 3 million hungry tarantulas on loan from "The Aspinall Spider Experience", Maidstone)

One further thing, Mr Major. You were hoping to employ a secret weapon at the next election, were you not?

You were hoping to rally your troops by calling on the services of your old controller, "M".

Well, I have a little susprise for you, Mr Major-Bond. The woman you know as "Margaret" is in fact a double agent, secretly working for me!

Rosa, come in my dear, and say hello to our visitors.

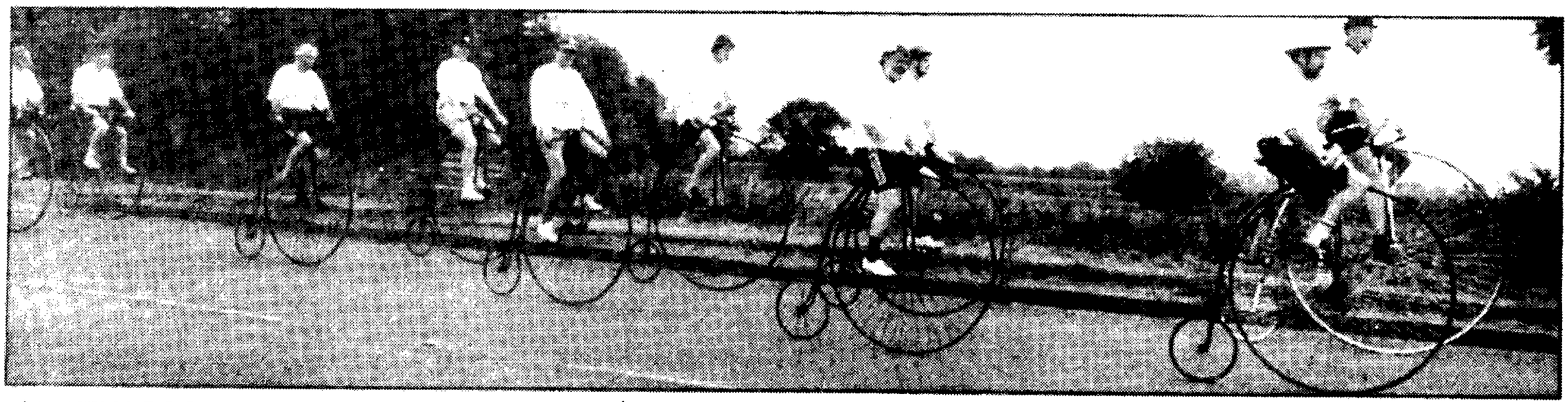
(Steel doors slide open at top of staircase to reveal aged virago with mad staring eyes, iron handbag, and fearsome steel-tipped leather boots. Rosa descends staircase and begins kicking Major to pulp)

Goodbye Mr Major. I have so enjoyed our little chats. But all good things, as they say, must come to an end, and even not so good things, like you.

(Sir Jams climbs into conning tower of nuclear submarine HMS Marmite and takes off for moon)

Issued On Behalf Of
The Referendum Party Of Great Britain

(The theme music for this advertisement — "For Your Votes Only" — was sung by Dame Shirley Porter)



WHEELY GOOD DAY OUT: Members of the Fabulous Family Fantom Farting Cycle Club, who set out from Halfpenny Bridge, Lechlade, last week to cycle to the Tower Bridge in London to raise money for the MacMillan Cancer Relief Fund

North Wilts Gazette & Herald

'A'-LEVELS 'NOT EASIER' CLAIMS GOVERNMENT

by Our Education Staff **Lunchtime O'Levels**

THE government last night defended the controversial 'A' Level results for 1996 which showed a pass-rate of 110%. 90% of candidates who sat the exam achieved an 'A' Grade and a further 90% were awarded an A+.

"Results would have been even better," said Education Secretary Mrs Gillian Shepherd, "if some of the students had learnt to read and write."

Sample Paper In Full

'A' Level Combined Geography and History

1. In which country did Oasis achieve their first chart success?
a) UK
b) UK
c) Take That

2. Chris Evans took his famous Radio One breakfast show to which country?
a) Scotland
b) Scotland
c) Blur

3. In which year did Chris Evans call Scottish DJ Tich McCooey "a stupid btard"?**
a) 1996
b) 1066
c) Stephen Fry

4. In which year did you first take Ecstasy? *(Shurely 'A' Levels? Ed.)*
a) 1917
b) The Battle of Agincourt
c) Chris Evans.

NOTE TO CANDIDATES: Congratulations. You have passed.

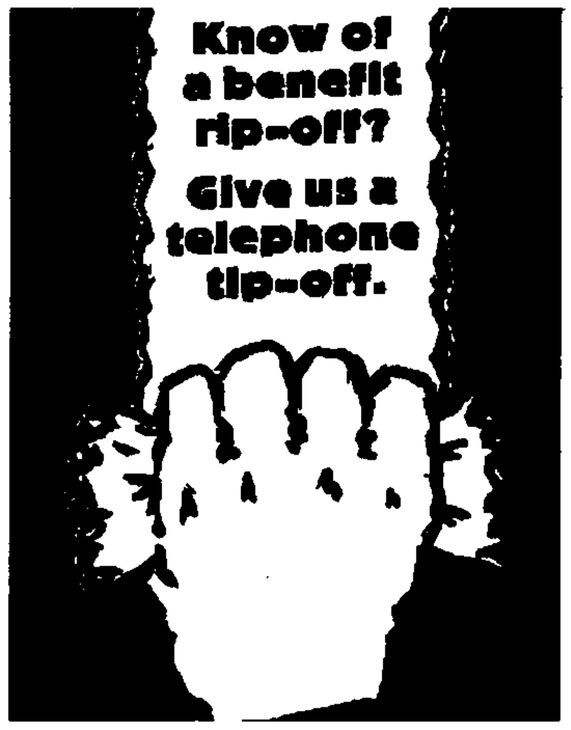
GOVERNMENT'S NEW SCHEME TO TRAP FRAUDSTERS

by Our Home Affairs Staff
Peter Silley

THE government has launched a new "cheat-line" to try and track down the increasing number of those attempting to defraud the Department of Social Security.

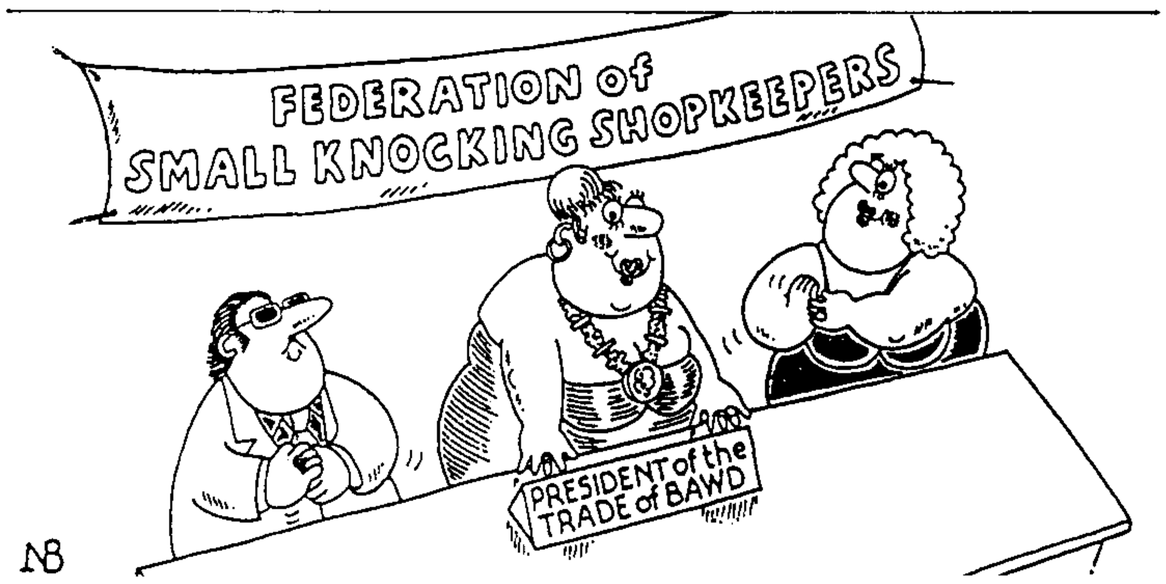
The first "tip-off of a rip-off" came today when a member of the public pointed the finger at the Treasury and a number of large property firms. The anonymous telephone caller said:

"Public money is being stolen on a vast scale. The Government



is selling off DSS assets on the cheap to firms who give the Tory Party money. This is theft pure and simple."

A government spokesman praised this whistleblower and said: "You can rest assured we will be taking absolutely no notice of this call at all. Shut up and get off the line."



P/472/EC/21b/487

Application For Licence To Operate As An Approved Interpersonal Sex Operative (Prostitute)

Name . . . . . .

Address . . . . . .

Postcode . . . . . .

Night-time Telephone Number . . . . . .

Please answer the following questions:

1. *Do you suffer from any of the following diseases?*

☐ BSE ☐ HIV ☐ CJD ☐ VD ☐ Nasty Cold

2. *What services do you intend to supply to your clients?*

☐ Straight French ☐ S&M ☐ M&S ☐ Chenevix-Trench

3. *From which of the following workplaces do you derive the bulk of your income?*

☐ Street Corner ☐ Cheap Hotel ☐ Back of Transit Van
☐ Massage Parlour

4. *Where do you advertise your services?*

☐ Telephone Kiosk ☐ Toilet Door ☐ Word of Mouth
☐ Daily Telegraph

5. *Which of the following public figures do you most admire?*

☐ Hugh Grant ☐ Frank Bough ☐ Jeffrey Archer
☐ Major Ronald Ferguson

6. *Which of the following statements most closely approximates to your own view of your role in society?*

☐ I provide a much-needed service for the sexually challenged community.

☐ I am keeping marriages together and thereby reinforcing the role of the family as the cornerstone of the social fabric.

☐ Would you like a nice time dearie? That will be a thousand pounds plus VAT.

Please return this form to Chief Constable "Knicker of the Yard" Knacker, New Scotland Yard, London SW1A 1AA

PRINCESS LOSES MEDIA AIDE

by **Our Royal Staff**

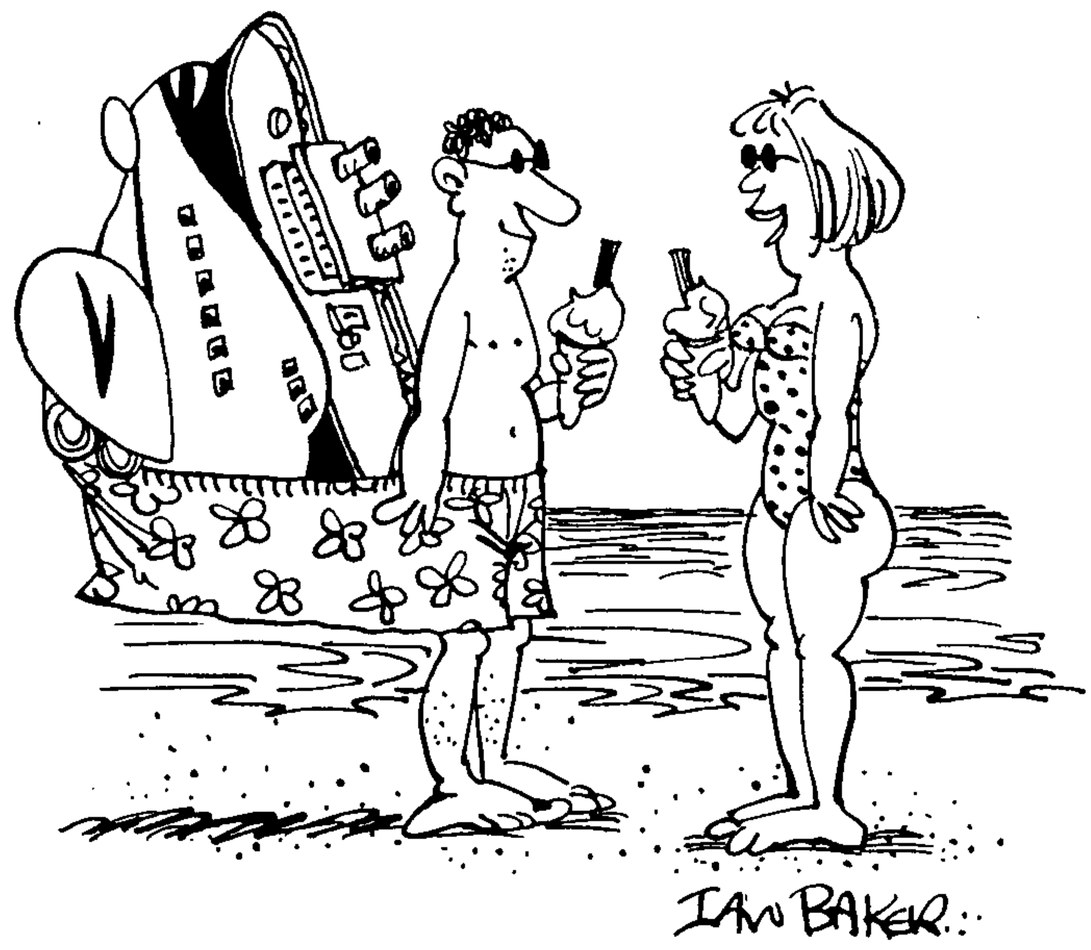
THE Princess of Wales has announced that she is to lose her distinguished media aide, Mr Charles Windsor, who is quitting after completing only 15 years of his lifetime contract.

A spokesman for the Princess said: "Of course she is upset to lose the person responsible for so much of her good PR.

"It is no secret that over the years Charles Windsor has been responsible for all the sympathetic press coverage that the Princess has received. He has personally made her the powerful figure she is today."

9.00 FILM: A Room with a View (James Ivory 1985 UK). Helena Bonehead Carter has a frisson with Julian Sands in a field

Independent



"I like the Bermuda Triangle shorts..."

GLENDA SLAGG

Fleet Street's Own Mad Cow

Veronica Lake

● CLARE SHORT — don'tcha love her!?! She's a feisty lass from Liverpool who speaks her mind, except when she's asked a question.

What a contrast from shifty Mr Blair, who can't give you a straight answer to anything??!?.

How dare he sack our Clare, the gal who's got the guts to say nothing!?!

○ CLARE SHORT — doesn't she make you sick!?! A-moanin' and a-groanin', a-whingein' and a-cringin', just because Mr Blair gave her the heave-ho!?!

You can't blame him, mister. Every time this loud-mouthed Scouser opens her mouth, she puts her size 12 boots in it.

Take a ferry across the Mersey, Shortie. And don't come back. Geddit?!

■ *HATS OFF to Michael 'Weatherman' Fish!?!*

Or, rather, knickers off — if you're not his wife!?!?

Who'd have thought it?!? They always say it's the quiet, bald, fat ones with the moustache and the flashy tie that you've got to watch!?!

Hi there Mike!?! How about a Fish Called Glenda?!?!? Geddit?!?

● MICHAEL FISH. What a creep!?! I can feel a depression coming on, just thinking about you.

Fancy two-timing your missus, just because you think you're a big TV star?!?

Well I've got news for you, Baldie!?!? There's a big storm coming your way, and it's called Hurricane Glenda?!?!!

■ *WHO SAYS Britain is finished?!? When it comes to not winning any medals at the Olympics, we win gold every time?!?!*

○ HERE they are — Glenda's Savannah Sizzlers?!?!

LINFORD CHRISTIE?!?! So he made two false starts?!?! Same with all my fellas!?!

SIR CHRISTOPHER BLAND, the BBC's new Chairman?!? I'll give you a "World Service" you can't forget?!?! Geddit?!

BENJAMIN NETANYAHU. Crazy name, crazy goy *(shurely 'guy'? Ed).*

Byeeeeeeee!

SUPERMODELS

KERBER

WAITRESS, MY HUSBAND DOESN'T FEEL TOO WELL.
FASHION CAFÉ LONDON
I BLAME THE THICK RICH TARTS
THEY MAKE EVERYONE FEEL SICK.
The Owners

Sorry ladies

Leading Chase project protester, Mr Peter Gilmore is not a misogynist. He did not write "Are you a stupid girl?" in his letter last week. He actually wrote "Are you a stupid git?" We apologise for this error which might have upset the female population.

Ross Gazette

Literary Review

Getting into bad hobbits

A Crown of Swords
Robert Jordan
(Orbit, £17.99)

"Come, Arseache, my Elf, Nurofen Owlbag, Filler of the Bowl. Our Quest, the Forbidden Lambada, deep in the Forests of Sprod – for I am Jordan the Windbreaker."

FORGET Jeffrey Archer, never mind *The Horse Whisperer*, here's a real publishing phenomenon. You don't believe me? The above item, more or less unpublicised and largely ignored in the posh prints, entered the hardback fiction bestseller list in the week of its publication last month and has been there ever since.

At the time of writing it stands at number two, down from number one the previous week. That's right — one of the most popular hardback novelists in England right now is, um, a bearded 48-year-old Yankee fantasist whom no one with any literary pretensions has ever heard of.

There has always been subterranean literature, of course. In Trollope's story *The Spotted Dog*, written in the 1860s, an upmarket journalist chances upon an office given over to the manufacture of penny dreadfuls and reflects, with a kind of ghastly awe, on the millions of people whose lives are touched by it. Only recently, though, have publishers woken up to the fact that, the average disposable income being what it is, you can actually sell subterranean literature — particularly the sub-Tolkien fantasy variant — in hard covers at eighteen quid.

A Crown of Swords is a famous example of this tendency: 650 pages long, decked out with winsome maps, the seventh instalment in a hulking chronicle called *The Wheel of Time*. It is, in any strict sense of the word, unreadable. No, I am not saying this for effect.

The book starts in a tower where two women named Elaida and Alviarin are having a chat. Whereupon we are suddenly informed that: "Nobody cared what happened in Ebou Dar, Elaida least of all; the capital of Altara could fall into the sea, and except for the merchants, not even the rest of Altara would notice. But Teslyn had sat in the Hall nearly fifteen years before Elaida had commanded her to resign her chair".

Now Vol.7 this may be, and in a no doubt crowded pageant, but *what is going on*? Establishing detail, anyone? Provenance? Happily it turns out that Alviarin has come by a secret message: perhaps this will help? "There is word from Ebou Dar, however," she briskly informs her chum. "Through the Gray... It appears Elayne Trakand and Nynaeve al'Meara are there. Posing as full sisters, with the blessings of the rebel... *embassy*... to Queen Tylin."

As another half-dozen imponderables snap loftily into place, the reader's eye slips nervously over the page to a paragraph in which Elaida tries a bit of inner reflection: "The lack of curiosity on Alviarin's face made Elaida wonder again how much the woman knew that she was not supposed to. The al'Meara girl might well provide a handle on al'Thor, coming from the same village. All the sisters knew that, just as they knew Elayne was Daughter-Heir of Andor, and that her mother was dead. Vague rumours linking Morgase to the Whitecloaks were so much nonsense..."

Six hundred pages later, one stumbles on the welcoming heading "Glossary". Hah, now I really can suss out all this stuff about sisters and Whitecloaks and some rather worrying honchos called Aes Sedai. Alas, the first entry is "A Note on Dates": "The Toman Calendar (devised by Toma dur Ahmid) was adopted approximately two centuries after the death of the last male Aes Sedai, recording years After the Breaking of the World (AB). So many records were destroyed in the Trolloc Wars that at their end there was argument about the exact year under the old system." At which point, gentle reader, I'm afraid I shut the door on this private party and scuttled away.

As ever with these sub-Tolkien orc-stalks, there are one or two points of interest. This one has a modish ecological fixation (the search for a magical bowl that may stop a continuous heatwave) and advertises a sort of groovy feminist telepathy known as "channelling". The funny names — no one except Tolkien has ever been able to do the funny names — come from all over the place: the Bible (Ishmael), *Beowulf* (Graendal), Shakespeare (Hal) — oh, and when we get to a character called Gareth Byrne, presumably the phone directory.

The best analogy I can suggest for this debased and noxious animal comes from popular music. Just as any elf-locked heavy metal ensemble wailing about cosmic destruction can be traced back to a blues guitarist sitting on his back porch in the Mississippi Delta, so these wads of storm-crossed suet ultimately derive from Professor Tolkien's North Oxford study circa 1935. The blurb maintains that the series grows richer with every volume. In fact this distinction belongs solely to the author.

BOOKS & BOOKMEN

☐ **ACCORDING to the *Guardian*, "speculation is already rife" as to the identity of Sponge, the anti-hero of Amanda Craig's forthcoming *roman à clef* about literary London, *A Vicious Circle*. He is a dandyish, flamboyant, loquacious, party-going literary editor, notorious for his tireless pursuit of comely young female authors and mini-skirted publicity women — using a crude seduction technique known as "the Sponge lunge".**

If speculation really is rife, it should cease at once: Sponge is a dead ringer for John Walsh, the dandyish, flamboyant etc, etc, bookman who tried an unsuccessful "Sponge lunge" on Amanda Craig a few years ago.

It will be interesting to see how Fleet Street literary editors react to this disgraceful satire on one of their own number. The *Independent* will no doubt be choosing its reviewer with particular care: the editor of the *Indie* books pages is none other than John Walsh.

■ *NEWS from HarperCollins is that the campaign for its "star" author, orthodontically-challenged Martin Amis, and his book* The Information, *has been a dismal failure.*

The master of modern fiction's latest book never reached the paperback top ten, but the Sunday Times estimated 7,000 copies a week were being sold. In fact publishing insiders claim The Information *has sold an astoundingly low total of... only 10,000 copies. Surely not?*

☐ THE *Sunday Express* has become the latest in a long line of newspapers to print a photo of gorgeous pouting Samantha Phillips, currently promoting her debut bonkbuster *Blonde Ambition*.

"In 1994," the paper reveals, "Samantha Phillips successfully sued her employers at Lloyd's of London for unfair dismissal and sexual discrimination. Now she has publisher her first novel..." Where the *Express* got that idea from is a bit of a mystery: Phillips's sexual discrimination claim actually failed, and she was awarded compensation solely for breach of her employment contract.

Although Phillips is being hyped by her publisher as some kind of feminist heroine, her *Express* interview suggests that this may not be strictly accurate. Replying to a question about money, she says "which sugar daddy are you talking about?"; asked about eating out, she explains that "my loved one always picks up the bill, so ask him".

Alas, in spite of all the publicity, *Blonde Ambition* has yet to trouble the bestseller lists.

'Bookworm'

EYE TOLD YOU SO

THE Nemesis File, a book released by Blake Publishing about Catholics bumped off by the SAS, has itself come to a sticky end.

In *Eye* 900, Bookworm explained that the remarkable tale had escaped the tirade of criticism which Andy McNab and Jack Ramsay's SAS sagas had attracted for one simple reason: "Its 'ex-soldier' author was never in the SAS and his story is complete tosh anyway."

Six weeks on and the Royal Ulster Constabulary agrees. "The allegations contained in the book are not true in fact or substance," it states. Paul Inman, the author of this imaginative tale, now faces prosecution for wasting police time.

Now that Inman has confessed to the hoax, his publisher, former *People* editor John Blake, is left looking rather stupid. The money made from the remarkable 105,000 copies sold so far — worth £1.68 million at full retail price — was supposed to be only the start. But hoped for serialisation and film rights will not bear fruit now that the book has been exposed as pure fantasy.

Blake still stands by the story. Apart from the money he will probably miss chaperoning his "assassin" to promotional events — most recently to an interview in June with the *Mail on Sunday*'s Tim Sebastian. As Sebastian wrote: "There is no independent way of confirming the claims... yet it is impossible to dismiss the story out of hand." No it isn't...

REMAINDERS OF THE DAY

THE BOOK: *In Search of Happiness* by Angus Deayton.

THE HYPE: Wit and style guru Deayton informs his fans how to find their personal nirvana for just £16.99.

LAST SEEN: In BookFun, Maidenhead High Street with its price rudely slashed to £3.99.

HOW THE NORSE MYTHS BEGAN

MY MATE THORFAR CAN DRINK TEN PINTS IN AN HOUR
OH YEAH? MY MATE ERIK SAILED TO VINLAND
YEAH? WELL I KNOW A BLOKE WHO FOUGHT A DRAGON
RGJ

footnotes

BUTCHERED

NO MINISTER under Margaret Thatcher pontificated more poetically about the virtues of pure private enterprise than John Butcher, the dashing MP for Coventry South West.

For six years, between 1983 and 1989, as industry minister with special responsibilities for the West Midlands and small businesses, he heralded the "new kind of manager/ director" who "will make possible the restoration of Britain's industrial base".

In July 1984 he launched a campaign "to bring the brains in information technology back to Britain". One of his greatest admirers was Birmingham businessman Colin Davies, who built up a profitable information technology group called Forms UK, and became a member of the council of the Confederation of British Industry.

Great was the hype, therefore, when in 1993 former minister Butcher and CBI mandarin Davies launched a new information technology firm called Imagesoft. A brochure published a glamorous picture of chairman John Butcher next to the exciting message: "Electronic processing for documents and data management is, without doubt, the most important growth area we will see in business IT over the coming years."

Imagesoft was no less than "a revolutionary approach for business at every level". In the first year, this revolutionary approach led to losses of £673,025, and in the second to losses of £792,876. In November last year, only days after converting a loan from his friend Colin Davies into 600,000 preferential shares, Mr Butcher suddenly resigned from the board. Two months later, the firm's debts were so huge that the directors were forced into a voluntary arrangement with their creditors. Now Imagesoft has been liquidated with debts of £1,135,583, including £61,983 owing to the Inland Revenue and £41,559 in national insurance.

A rather subjective history of the company produced by the directors and circulated to creditors by Birmingham liquidators Casson Beckman and Partners blames the receivership on a supplying company — even though that company hasn't been paid for the software it provided. Angry creditors are inclined to point the finger of blame elsewhere. They note for instance that in Imagesoft's first year, when its entire turnover was £115,480, the directors paid themselves £97,416.

Impertinent questions are also being asked about expensive cars bought for directors and record-breaking entertainment expenses at top people's eateries, especially the House of Commons where Butcher regularly entertained his new business colleagues and customers. On one occasion a special dining room at the House was hired to entertain the revolutionary entrepreneurs of the future. Reckless references to such matters could be dangerous. Mr Butcher is still an MP and the government's majority is one.

Home from Home Office

■ IN THE month that two murder cases (the Bridgewater Four, *Eyes passim*; and Alf Fox, *Eye* 832) are referred by the home secretary to the court of appeal, what has happened to the criminal cases review commission, which should by now be dealing with all such cases?

The original plan was for the commission to have started on 1 April this year. Then the start-up was put off until September. Now even that deadline will not be met.

Applicants to be commissioners have just had letter from a head-hunting agency, Recruitment and Assessment Services, apologising for the delay. "Unfortunately," the letter whined, "we do not have definitive dates for the later stages of recruitment." The letter refers to "our clients, the Home Office", which puzzles those who campaigned for the new commission, and insisted, as proof of its independence from the Home Office, that commissioners should be appointed by the prime minister.

On 31 May the *Eye* commented on the remarkable appointment as commission chairman of the Thatcher knight Sir Frederick Crawford, whose speciality is plasma physics. Sir Frederick negotiated a salary of £88,000 a year, compared to the advertised £80,000. Though he has no published record of any interest in criminal injustice, he beat Louis Blom-Cooper QC, who has devoted much of his life to fighting injustice. Could the problem with the commissioners be that not enough credible applicants are solid Tories like Sir Fred, and that Michael Howard can't bear the thought of appointing anybody who might fight against any further cases of injustice?

STAGECOACH CORNER

1. Lounge Lazard

THOSE who scoff at the vast amounts of money made by mediocre managers who bought bits of British Rail cheap from the government and pocketed vast fortunes flogging them off to Stagecoach don't seem to understand the principle at stake: free competition.

A fine example was set in the sale of British Rail engineering depots and service centres, a sale criticised even by the national audit office (NAO).

British Rail appointed Lazards as its financial adviser for the sale without competition because, Lazards was already "advising" British Rail on something else. The Lazards director in charge of the sale was Michael Roberts, who had been with Lazards since leaving university 30 years ago.

Early in 1994, overwhelmed perhaps by the possible conflict of interest, Lazards told British Rail it didn't want to be involved in the actual sale process. On 29 March 1994, Mr Roberts left Lazards and joined the burgeoning new German-owned West Bank. Six weeks later British Rail's vendor unit came up with a brilliant idea for a new bank to "advise" on the sale process: er, West Bank, and Mr Roberts. This appointment, strange to say, was made without any competition.

2. The Tender Trap

SOON after taking over South West Trains, the new transport monopoly Stagecoach launched an advertisement campaign to encourage local bus operators to supply feeder services to trains in Hampshire.

Specifically they called for "expressions of interest from high quality bus and coach companies" to run services between Bordon and Liphook and Romsey and Winchester. Locals were rather impressed at the selfless way in which the new rail operator sought other firms to attract traffic to the railway. They were rather less impressed when the name of the high quality company which won the contract was announced: Hampshire Bus, a subsidiary of... Stagecoach.

3. Spindler's hit

MARK SPINDLER, who has a small electrical shop in Bognor Regis, was mending the Christmas lights in the town centre when a Sussex Stagecoach bus smashed into his lorry, knocking him to the ground 15ft below.

Mr Spindler suffered a fractured pelvis, a split bladder and other injuries which have left him disabled for life. True to the Christian spirit which inspires the firm's bosses, Stagecoach sued Mr Spindler for the damage to the bus — £495.

After a long case at Chichester county court in which Mr Spindler claimed he was the one entitled to damages, Stagecoach won. Mr Spindler has to pay the £495, plus £15,000 costs.

MARK SPINDLER

WHAT AN AWFUL MESSER

ALSO A SOLICITOR: Cholmeley Messer

LAW NOT JUSTICE: Patricia Eaton

A MILLION pounds of public money have been spent on a wholly unnecessary legal case which has ruined the life of an able and dedicated teacher who, after 16 years of fighting in the courts, has finally been completely vindicated.

The money was spent by three public authorities, the last of which, the London Pension Fund Authority, chairman Cholmeley Messer (*sic*), admits it has spent £220,000 on legal fees in the case of Patricia Eaton, a former lecturer employed by the Inner London Education Authority. The money went into the substantial pockets of City solicitors Eversheds and London barrister Paul Stewart.

The lad from Avery Hill

The wrecking of Patricia Eaton's career began in 1980 after the end of a relationship with a fellow lecturer at Avery Hill teachers' training college in Eltham. The man, who was married, also had a relationship with one of his students, who wrote obscene letters to his wife. However, the lecturer and his wife inferred to the college authorities that Patricia Eaton had written the letters.

The lecturer then wrote to the college principal and six colleagues making even more offensive allegations against her which were quite untrue. Patricia Eaton asked for a retraction. When she didn't get one, and when the college authorities refused to discipline the lecturer, she sued for libel. In 1983 she won her case and £12,000 damages, plus costs.

The lecturer made himself bankrupt and still owes her more than £20,000. He continued working for the ILEA at another college. Patricia Eaton was systematically victimised by his supporters at Avery Hill. In 1980, when the first allegations were made, she was removed from the school where she was supervising student teaching practice. After the libel case in 1983, though ILEA agreed she had behaved entirely honourably, she was suspended from her job for six weeks. In 1986, after the college had merged with Thames Polytechnic, she was told she had no timetable and was barred from the premises. She never went back. Her career had been ruined, she claims, by biased management for which she held the ILEA responsible.

In 1989, the ILEA promised a full investigation under a QC and then reneged on the promise. A private inquiry by Marion Stockley, former head of personnel at the Greater London Council, produced a devastating indictment of the management of the college, the polytechnic and the authority. Patricia Eaton's career, the report concluded, had been "irretrievably damaged" by the way she had been treated — "tossed around like a pebble on the shore for nearly 10 long years".

The report recommended the immediate payment of £50,000 compensation. ILEA offered £15,000 — and refused to publish the report or allow Patricia Eaton to see it. In 1990 she sued ILEA for breach of contract and duty of care. That year, the ILEA was abolished and the case passed to the unelected London Residuary Body, which hired commercial solicitors Jaques and Lewis, later taken over by Eversheds. In 1992, the LRB was wound up and the case went on to the London Pensions Fund Authority. It inherited the same lawyers, who paid £50,000 into court.

Eversheds get the ready

When Patricia Eaton turned down the offer, it was halved. She was then swamped by expensive applications and appeals to strike out her action, all of which failed. When she finally got legal aid in 1993, Eversheds wrote to the Legal Aid Board at least four times to try to get it to stop paying. Her legal aid was stopped in 1995. Abortive meetings were held in the House of Commons with Nick Raynesford MP, but the authority stubbornly refused to increase its offer. Equally, Patricia Eaton refused to accept it. Finally last summer, the pensions authority raised its payment into court to £190,000. When this too was turned down, it agreed that its barrister, Eldred Tabachnik QC, should meet Ms Eaton's representative, London solicitor Geoffrey Bindman, to discuss a settlement. When Tabachnik agreed a much higher figure than had been offered, the authority sacked him and on 24 June this year came to court with a new QC, two other barristers and the usual army from Eversheds threatening to fight the action.

Double her money

They had no case, however. At the door of the court, they finally agreed a settlement which more than doubled the "maximum" they had paid into court. Into the bargain they published grovelling apologies in two national newspapers.

This settlement could have been reached at any time in the last six years and allowed Patricia Eaton, who is now 62, to continue her career. Nick Raynsford, who says this is the most scandalous waste of public money he has ever dealt with, has sent the papers to the national audit office (NAO) for investigation. The chief executive of the LPFA, Peter Scales, is not very worried. He says the NAO "doesn't have direct jurisdiction over us". Asked by the *Eye* what he has to say about the extravagant and unnecessary legal fees shelled out by the authority, he replied helpfully: "The decision we took was not to make any public comment on this case now it's finished."

Gravey train

■ THE real scandal of the fantastic scam in which Shirley Porter's Tory council flogged off three Westminster cemeteries in 1987 for 15 pence was that no one was ever prosecuted for it. Now at last the two biggest crooks involved — John Whybrow and Rodney Hylton-Potts — have been convicted of a very similar scam and sent to prison.

Whybrow was a property shark who slunk around the London councils looking for likely bargains. His chief asset was a bent solicitor called Rodney Hylton-Potts. In November 1986, acting on information received, Whybrow asked prestigious London valuers Henry Butcher and Partners to put a price on three cemeteries owned by Westminster council. The result had him licking his lips: £1.25 million.

Two months later, in January 1987, Westminster council flogged off the three cemeteries for 15 pence to a cluster of companies whose solicitor was Rodney Hylton-Potts. One of these companies sold the cemeteries for £1.25 million to another of the companies, which sold them on again for £1.75 million, thus making for Messrs Whybrow and Hylton-Potts a clear profit of half a million pounds.

Many Westminster citizens, including some whose relatives had been buried in the wrecked cemeteries, alleged fraud and demanded a full investigation. The fraud squad was brought in, but no action was taken. Messrs Whybrow and Hylton-Potts went on to higher things. Using a cluster of offshore companies including one called Majus Inns, which was a play on the words "Major Sins", Whybrow and

PORTER'S PLOT: Smashed headstones

Hylton-Potts swindled a couple of Scottish banks of £217,000 by inflating the value of three hotels they were buying. They also lied about Whybrow's enormous overdraft.

This time they were swindling banks, however, not ratepayers, and this time the police caught up with them. On 11 July, after a 59-day trial at Southwark crown court, they were convicted and sent to prison for five years.

A BERT TURN

■ Hubert Spencer, who is out of jail after serving 17 years for murdering farmer Hubert Wilkes in 1979, seems to be in a bit of tizzy about the Home Secretary's reference to the Court of Appeal of the Carl Bridgewater murder case.

Spencer, who was an early suspect for the murder of the newspaper boy, told the Observer (28th July) that he would "attend the appeal to nail the lies".

The next day (29 July) he was quoted in the Wolverhampton Express and Star saying "he would not be attending the Appeal Court".

You can write to Paul Foot at 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG, or leave a message for him on 0171 287 3183

In the City

WHILE busily seeking to raise funds for the Tories through the discreet Millennium Club, president Alan Lewis has been equally busily endeavouring to stop the Inland Revenue collecting more than £7.5 million from his Hartley Investment Trust, owners of textile group Illingworth Morris.

Since 1987 Lewis has been engaged in a rearguard action with the revenue. As at March 1995, the Revenue was claiming a total of just over £5 million in corporation tax from several companies within his Hartley Investment Trust group, where leading Tory backbencher and Millennium Club figure Sir Marcus Fox is a director. So long has the dispute been running that a year ago the interest alone was estimated at £2.7 million.

The origin of most if not all of the revenue claim stems from a complex transaction in 1987 when, ahead of the general election, Lewis switched his controlling 42 percent stake in Illingworth Morris from four Hartley subsidiaries to an offshore trust. Lewis had acquired control of the woollen group in 1982 via an Isle of Man company, Abele. This controlling stake was sold to a Netherlands Antilles company owned by the British Virgin Islands trustee of a trust of which Lewis is the "sole life tenant". The kind of tax driven deal of which any patriotic Tory could be proud!

Two years later, with the Tories safely back in power, Hartley, which Lewis owns, itself acquired the controlling stake in Illingworth Morris and later mopped up the minority shareholders. But since that original transaction, the revenue has been on the case of the Hartley companies that held the Illingworth Morris shares — Lothbury Investment Corporation, Tetherwyn and Abele.

Lewis says the claims are disputed and that negotiations with the revenue continue. In the meantime, the companies and their £7.7 million liability are not consolidated in the 1995 Hartley accounts.

Good to see that such an avid Conservative party backer is doing his bit to reduce government borrowing.

REGULATORS who publicly espouse lies as truth are unlikely to intimidate those with bad intentions or conveniently short memories. So the stock exchange will have discouraged few future offenders with its censuring of *Eye* favourite Rupert Galliers-Pratt for "forgetting" to record 17 failed companies of which he had been a director in the recent prospectus for Optical Care (Bermuda).

The stock exchange meekly "accepted that the omissions were the result of error rather than being deliberate" in the face of what Optical Care's inept advisers Gerrard Vivian Gray admitted was "a series of complete omissions" on a form "which lacked any ambiguity".

For his part "RPG" happily admitted he had "absolutely no excuse" but claimed the raft of omissions were "an accident and a mistake". The "mistake", said this latest victim of the Ernest Saunders strain of Alzheimer's disease, had been "discovered in May" and immediately called to the attention of the stock exchange. This transparent alibi was accepted by the stock exchange, despite having the Old Etonian wealth redistribution expert bang to rights, in return for his acceptance of the public censure. Doubtless the alternative was too call him a liar and face a long legal hassle.

The truth is that Galliers-Pratt "discovered" his blind spot (as did the stock exchange and Gerrard Vivian Gray) and experienced instant recall only after the £5.75 million collapse of his Hotelier company was disclosed by *Eye* 898 in mid-May, three months after the Optical Care prospectus for its flotation on the Alternative Investment Market. His memory was no doubt further refreshed and the stock exchange encouraged to act by *Eye* 891 in June which detailed the near £1 million collapse of Balidar Properties, also omitted from the prospectus despite a requirement, stated to have been fulfilled, to list any directorship held within 12 months of bankruptcy, receivership or liquidation. A month later "RPG" was censured.

So what exactly by "error" did Galliers-Pratt forget other than Hotelier and Balidar? With some there was partial recall. He remembered he had been a director but forgot they had gone into liquidation in February 1993, along with Hotelier and Balidar. So he "forgot" that Hotelier's parent company Sheet Road Investments had collapsed with no assets but owing £132,000. He similarly overlooked the fate of Navygate (debts £401,000); Quorumlyn (£64,000) and Radmarsh (£49,000). Most of these debts were to related "RPG" companies, but there were also substantial unpaid debts for professional fees and tax.

Then there were the companies Galliers-Pratt "forgot" completely. Remarkably this lapse of memory even included RPG Developments, which also folded in February 1993 with debts of £795,000 and no assets. His bankers took a £205,000 hit. Equally overlooked were Radwaycrown, which went under owing £2 million, mostly to Hotelier but with substantial debts in fees and tax. Landlot cost creditors £204,000.

Also totally omitted from the prospectus was any mention of TV and video retailer Discos, where Galliers-Pratt was chairman until seven months before it crashed in 1991 owing £4.75 million but with assets valued at only £55,000.

Less serious were the seven companies, six of which appeared as past directorships, dissolved for inactivity. Similarly Laxstone which, uniquely for "RPG", was wound up with a surplus, shared by Galliers-Pratt, his brother and a business associate.

It is difficult to understand how even a busy if unsuccessful (for others rather than himself) businessman like Rupert Galliers-Pratt can by "mistake" overlook a group of hopelessly bankrupt companies which collapsed only three years ago with debts of more than £10 million and for which he was often the sole director and signed the statement of affairs sent to creditors. Yet that is what "RPG" would have us believe — and the stock exchange accepted.

How could he "forget" that companies whose past directorships he remembered had gone bust? How could he "forget" directorships of other bankrupt companies in the same group, one of which was named after him? How could he "forget" being the chairman of another company which crashed owing almost £5 million? The answer is, of course, that he did not "forget" at all. There was no "error", no "mistake". Galliers-Pratt realised only too well that this litany of failure would have not exactly impressed those asked to buy Optical Care shares. It might also have made the stock exchange think twice about whether he was a fit and proper person to be the chairman of a listed company. So Rupert Galliers-Pratt just "forgot" about all these companies and their creditors when it came to filling out the forms which asked him about past directorships and company failures. And Gerrard Vivian Gray and lawyers S.J. Berwin were only to happy to accept what the chairman said and collect their generous fees of more than $1 million.

A cursory check at Companies House would have discovered the trail of company crashes. But then how do the stock exchange and Optical Care's advisers force out a chairman who is also the largest shareholder? The only "error" was that the lie was spotlighted by *Private Eye*, forcing Galliers-Pratt to come clean and the stock exchange to bare its gums.

FURTHER proof of stock exchange impotence is the fact that despite threats and investigations (such as over W.H. Smith's sale of Do it All to Boots in June) the use of financial PR men and compliant Sunday newspapers to make company announcements disguised as revelations goes on apace.

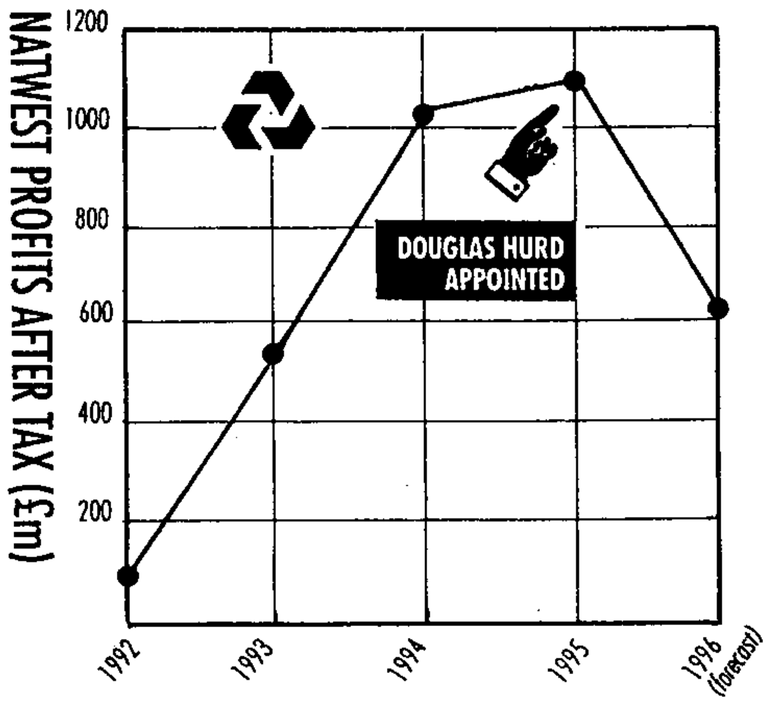
The Sunday business sections on 4 August showed the synchronised story system working overtime. The *Sunday Telegraph* and *Sunday Times* both "revealed" not only that Hays would raise its bid for Christian Salvesen, but that Ultra Electronics is to be floated next month and that Allders is to buy a clutch of Owen Owen stores from Philip Green!

The *Sunset Times* and the *Independent on Sunday* "revealed" Rank is to sell off assets worth £250-300 million. And the *Sunday Telegraph* and the *Observer* "revealed" Land Securities had sold a London office block for £130 million. What would Sunday be without financial flaks and press releases disguised as stories?

'Slicker'

British Management Part 41.

RT HON DOUGLAS HURD CBE MP, novelist, Lodencoat model, former Northern Ireland Secretary, former Home Secretary, former Foreign Secretary and hydro-electric dam expert. Deputy Chairman NatWest Markets and Director National Westminster Bank plc since 1995.



IN THE BACK

Arden C. (Guy) McClelland

ON 28 January 1994 we published an article referring to Mr Arden C (Guy) McClelland and a company of which he was a director, Maccorp Holdings Limited. The article may have suggested that Mr McClelland had been guilty of criminal or improper conduct. In particular, that he had deceived investors in Maccorp Holdings Limited which included individual pensioners and had acted dishonestly and improperly in his role as a director of the company.

Mr McClelland subsequently brought a high court action against the *Eye*. In a recent statement in open court we acknowledged that, following our investigations, there was no truth in such allegations and that we did not intend to make them. We accepted that the investors in Maccorp Holdings Limited were established financial institutions, specialising in providing venture capital for such projects, which invested only after extensive due diligence and that Mr McClelland did not seek investment from individual pensioners, nor were funds raised from them. We have apologised to Mr McClelland and his family for any embarrassment caused by the publication of our article and have also paid Mr McClelland proper compensation and his legal costs.

The article also referred to earlier libel proceedings brought against the *Eye* by Mr McClelland in respect of an article published in May 1990 which suggested that he had acted dishonestly, illegally and improperly. We have previously acknowledged in open court that there was no foundation in these allegations and have apologised for having published them.

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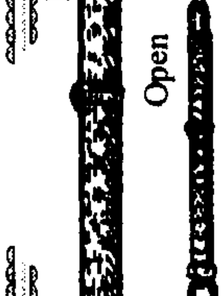

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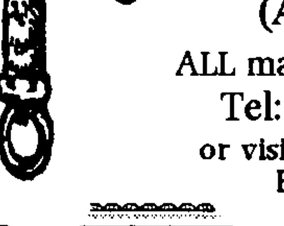

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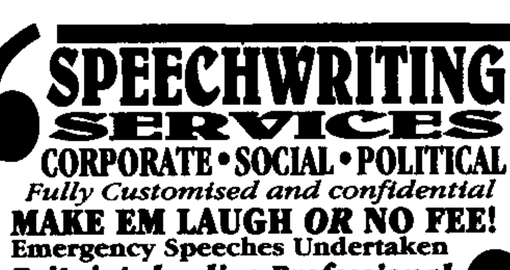

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YOU ARE ATTRACTIVE, attached lady, feeling unloved and taken for granted, looking for long term relationship to rediscover fun and real feeling of being spoilt and loved. I am mid 40s, tall, successful businessman, looking for same. Let's make it happen. Photo please. Box 3704.

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TALL, ATTRACTIVE, foreign male, 29, married, brown eyes, athletic build, seeks female in London, S/E area for fun and friendship. Box 1303.

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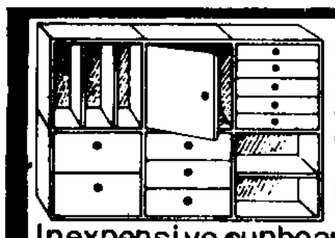

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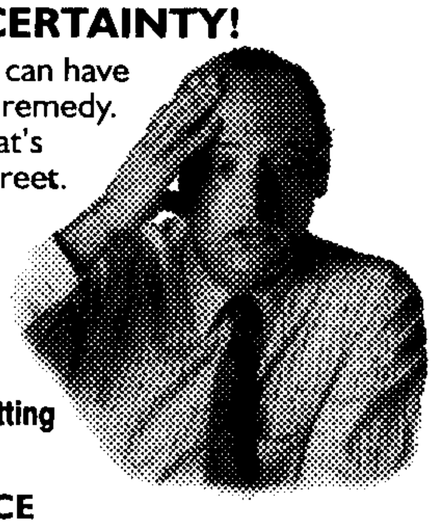

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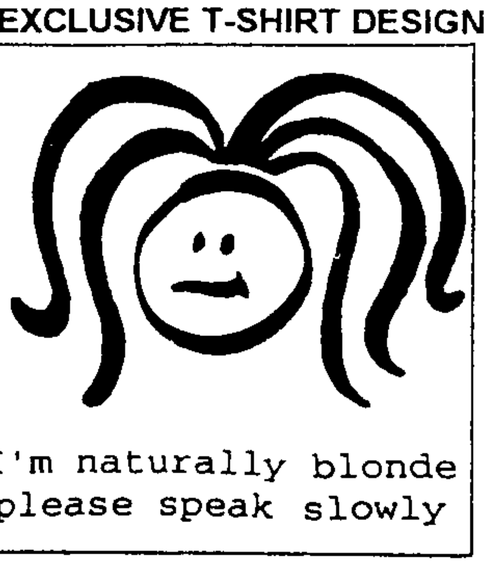

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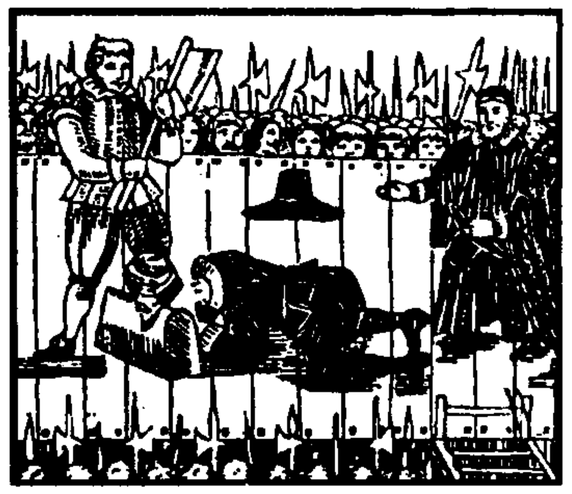

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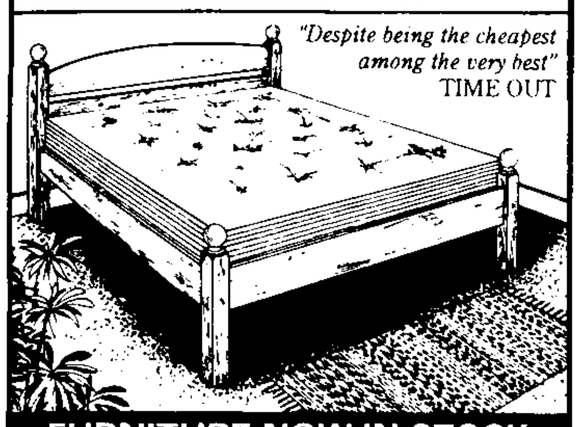

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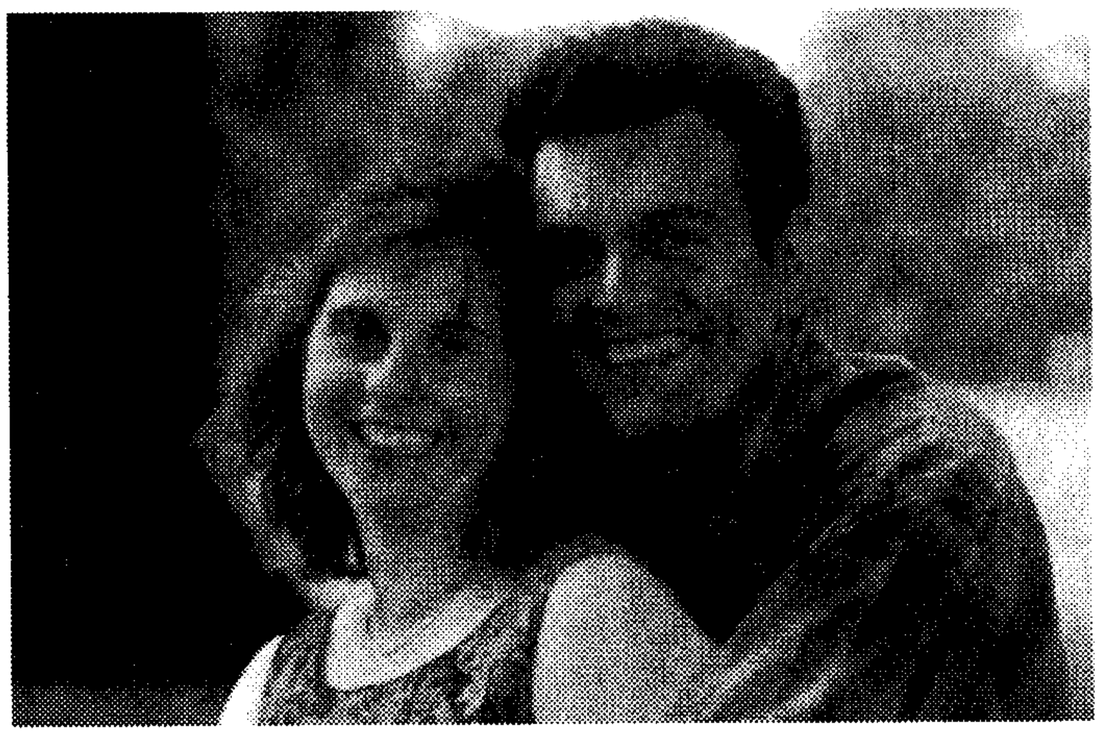

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Please complete in block capitals

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I am seriously interested in meeting someone through Dateline.

2. Personal Information

Marital Status: Single ❒ Divorced ❒
Widowed ❒ Separated ❒

Age:_____ Height:_____

Occupation:_____

Religion:_____

Build: slight ❒ medium ❒ large ❒

Attractiveness:

Very attractive ❒ Attractive ❒ Average ❒

3. Education

Private / Public ❒ Grammar ❒
Comprehensive ❒
Secondary Modern ❒

O Levels / GCSE's ❒ A levels ❒
Further Education ❒
University / Professional Equivalent ❒
Technical Qualification ❒

4. Your Personality

(tick which traits closely describe you)

❒ Affectionate ❒ Fashionable
❒ Serious ❒ Practical
❒ Considerate ❒ Conventional
❒ Shy ❒ Reliable
❒ Romantic ❒ Adventurous

5. Your Attitudes

(tick for yes, cross for no or leave blank if you don't feel strongly)

❒ Do you prefer town life?
❒ Do you involve yourself with community activities?
❒ Do you have many friends of your own sex?
❒ Are you interested in current affairs?
❒ Are you looking for one special relationship?
❒ Do you like team activities?
❒ Does your work make it difficult to meet new people?
❒ Do you feel resentful when forced to act quickly?
❒ Do you want to extend your social life as well as finding a special relationship?
❒ Do you devote a lot of time to your social life?

6. Your interests

(sections 6. and 7. Please tick for a liking, cross for a dislike or leave blank for no pref.)

❒ Wining/Dining ❒ Jazz/Folk music
❒ Pubs ❒ Classical music
❒ Sports/Keep fit ❒ Theatre/Arts
❒ Entertaining ❒ Watching TV
❒ Reading ❒ Smoking
❒ Travelling ❒ Mixing with friends
❒ Walking ❒ Children
❒ Cinema ❒ D.I.Y. / Crafts
❒ Pets/Animals ❒ Gardening
❒ Pop music ❒ Sightseeing

7. Details of the partner you would like:

Minimum age:_____ Maximum age:_____

Height: min._____ max._____ Don't mind ❒

Marital status: Single ❒ Divorced ❒
Widowed ❒ Separated ❒
Don't mind ❒

Build: slight ❒ medium ❒ large ❒

Attractiveness:

Very attractive ❒ Attractive ❒ Average ❒

Dept. PE 54

Please answer the questions above, cut out this page and send it to us at Dateline 23 Abingdon Road, London W8 6AL *or call us now on (01869) 324 100*

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